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CRITICAL STUDY
OF THE
Non-Cooperation Movement in India

BY
J. B. RAJU

I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice,
I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse,
I will not retreat a single inch - AND I WILL BE HEARD."

—William Lloyd Garrison,
in the Liberator.

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To
L. A. O.

ne of the great nameless band of those who
ritish by birth have devoted themselves silently
d unselfishly to the true good of India and the
ervice of mankind, but for whose never-failing
elp and inspiration these pages would not have
en written, this booklet is offered as a humble
bute of affection and gratitude.

FOREWORD.

This booklet is being published at the request of many friends, British and Indian, who have expressed the hope that it may prove of some real use in the present Non-Cooperation controversy in India. The writer is not a politician, representing any particular school of thought or political party. He is only a student of political philosophy who holds the firm conviction that no far-reaching political reconstruction is possible without an adequate discussion of the underlying principles. He feels that a great deal of what has so far appeared on the subject has only concerned itself with practical details and subordinate side issues and that discussion has not yet penetrated to the deeper level of the fundamental principles involved. This booklet claims to be nothing more than a critical study from an impartial academic standpoint, and if its pages help in some measure to focus the attention of readers on the main issues at stake, they will not have been written in vain.

J. B. RAJU.

NAGPUR,
December 15th, 1920.

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I

THE HISTORY AND MEANING OF THE MOVEMENT.

Far and away the most prominent question agitating the public mind of India to-day is what has been called non-cooperation. (At the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee which assembled in the sacred city of Benares in the closing days of May of this year, it was proposed by Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi the well-known hero of the South African Passive Resistance Movement, who has since returned to India and more recently entered the theatre of Indian public life that a programme of non-violent non-cooperation should be recommended by that Committee to the Country, including the boycott of the reformed Councils, as a protest against the actual terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty to which the British Imperial Government had assented, and the further fact of the decision in regard to the Punjab affairs.) (But the Committee felt that it was not within the scope of its powers to accept Mr. Gandhi's revolutionary proposal, specially as it was in clear contradiction of the resolution relating to the Reform Scheme passed at the immediately preceding session of the Congress at Amritsar in December, 1919. So it was decided to summon a special ses-

sion of the Congress at Calcutta before the fifteenth of September to pronounce on Mr. Gandhi's proposal, and meanwhile to give the Country a chance to consider it.) This responsible body regarded a period of barely over three months quite sufficient for the Country to consider and pronounce on so momentous and revolutionary a step as the non-cooperation proposal which had as yet only been stated by its author very incompletely in meagre outline.

(But the Central Khilafat Committee which assembled at Allahabad immediately after in the opening days of June to discuss the situation created by the actual terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty, saw no cause to wait to consider) so novel a proposal or its possible farreaching consequences, but then and (there definitely decided to adopt non-cooperation as the only practical course of protest open to them.) (Mr. Gandhi in a solemn speech expressed his whole hearted sympathy for the Moslem cause and urged a programme of non-cooperation as the best means of getting the Turkish Peace terms reversed in conformity with the expressed demands of Indian Moslems) The scheme of non-cooperation was to be graduated in distinct stages, and before the first of them was introduced, it was decided to send an ultimatum to the Viceroy of India giving him one month's notice to get an international decision regarding the fate of Turkey reversed, and if he could not achieve that

to resign his exalted office and join the non-cooperation movement.

/ During the three months that intervened between this and the session of the special Congress at Calcutta, Mr. Gandhi travelled far and wide throughout the length and breadth of the Country along with his Moslem compatriots, seeking to preach his new gospel of non-cooperation to Hindus as well as Moslems in order to gain their united support. (Here the Punjab affair presented itself as a convenient channel of appeal to the Hindu section of the Community. So we find Mr. Gandhi urging a double cause for non-cooperation calculated to appeal to each of the two great sections of the people of the Country,) namely the Khilafat which primarily affected the Moslems, to whom the Hindus also were said to owe a neighbourly duty, and if by any chance their sense of neighbourliness was not sufficiently strong to move them to action on behalf of a supposed religious wrong said to have been perpetrated on Islam, (there was the Punjab affair to make a direct appeal to the Hindu community).

(As regards the non-violent character of the movement, Mr. Gandhi proclaimed in no uncertain voice that the unique mission of India was to show the world that the true method of overcoming human opposition is not justice based on violence, but justice based on self-sacrifice. He pointed out in his characteristic style that the battle was to be

fought and won without resorting to violence in any shape or form. He said that on the one side was strength of arms and on the other moral force, and that he wanted to win the fight through sheer moral force.) He candidly admitted that last year he had miscalculated the fitness and readiness of the people of this country to accept his gospel of Satyagraha, and that he bitterly regretted the outbreaks of violence that had occurred. But now he felt certain that the country was more prepared and the people better disciplined for the reception of his message. Nevertheless talking of the present situation, Mr. Gandhi has made the significant confession that some of his followers at any rate do not share his convictions, and so we must pronounce such followers as not yet really prepared for his message. He has frankly admitted that some of these believed in methods of violence and would gladly have drawn the sword against the British Empire if it had been in their power to do so ; but as it was not in their power they had decided to loyally support him in his method of non-violent non-cooperation which he preached as a sacred duty for all. So far as this section of his followers at any rate are concerned, it follows clearly from Mr. Gandhi's own admissions that it is no exalted spiritual conviction or moral consideration that makes them accept his gospel, but only the very much lower motive of expediency ;

and yet Mr. Gandhi's lofty spiritual sense does not scruple to avail itself of such questionable support for his cause.

Further his speeches during this intervening period before the Calcutta Congress clearly show that while he and his compatriots were working heart and soul to win the support of the Country and to make it impossible for the Special Congress to give any other verdict, yet at the same time they had made their choice quite independent of and long before the Congress session assembled, and also they made it quite evident that it was the solemn duty of all who realised the sacred character of non-co-operation, to act on it at once as a matter of conscience without waiting for the verdict of the Congress. This is specially significant in view of the subsequent claim made by non-co-operators after they had gained a majority vote at the Calcutta session, that the verdict of the Congress is not merely advisory but mandatory and binding on all alike.) We shall examine this claim more in detail on a future page. Here we simply call attention to the inconsistency in the attitude of non-co-operators before and after they had won their victory in the Special Congress. There has been a clear change of attitude on their part towards the mandatory character of Congress decisions.

(When the special sessions of the National

Congress and the Moslem League assembled in Calcutta in the early days of September this year it was quite evident that a considerable number of people had been captured by the idea of using non-co-operation as a convenient political weapon if not to checkmate and paralyse altogether, at least to embarrass Government to a considerable extent.) Though there was great divergence of opinion as to the exact scope and details in the practical application of non-co-operation, yet there was widespread unanimity as to the efficacy and utility of the principle itself. (On Wednesday the eighth of September the Moslem League definitely accepted Mr. Gandhi's programme of non-co-operation as the only course open to it.) On the following day the National Congress decided in its favour by a clear majority of votes, though the result was questioned and a poll demanded which was taken and declared on the next day.

An analysis of the Congress vote is significant, especially in view of the claim subsequently made as to its mandatory character. Out of the total number of 5,814 delegates who were registered as such for the Special Congress only 2,773, that is considerably less than one-half, actually voted on the resolution. Out of these only 1855, that is considerably less than one third of the entire body of registered delegates, voted for non-cooperation. Of the remainder 873 voted against it and the

remainder declared themselves neutral. Yet in the face of these facts this majority vote in favour of non-cooperation has been actually claimed as not merely advisory but as definitely mandatory. The hollowness of this claim would become still more evident if we proceed to analyse still further the component elements that went to make up the Congress majority vote for non-cooperation. ¶ It is quite true that ten out of the twelve provinces showed a clear majority in favour of Mr. Gandhi's resolution. ¶ But what does this prove ?

We must remember in this context that that great assembly called (the Indian National Congress is a peculiarly indefinite body of uncertain dimensions and elusive character.) There is nothing in the Congress constitution to guarantee a uniformly proportionate or adequately steady representation of all the various provinces or conflicting interests in the country at each session. The number of delegates from the various provinces varies from session to session according to the accident of the locality at which the Congress happens to meet. There is a general very natural tendency in such an informal body as the Congress to have a disproportionately large number of delegates from the Province in which it happens to be held, and a correspondingly disproportionately small number from the more distant Provinces. There is nothing to guarantee an intelligible continuity in its de-

liberations and decisions ; and there is nothing to prevent a future session from reversing the Calcutta verdict merely on the score of the accidental causes of variation in composition and complexion to which the Congress constitution is so peculiarly liable.

Nevertheless it would be unfair for us therefore to rush to the opposite extreme and conclude that the Calcutta verdict in favour of non-cooperation means nothing. It does unmistakably mean that Mr. Gandhi's message has, owing to a variety of contributory causes, really fired the imagination and captured the hearts of a considerable number of people all over the Country ; and these were sufficiently interested and numerous to be able to secure a majority among those who voted in the Calcutta Session. But the point is that there is nothing to ensure or guarantee that the Congress will stand by this decision always or even that at the moment it adequately represents in any intelligible manner the considered judgment of the Country as a whole. These considerations regarding the inherently unstable nature of the Congress constitution and the analysis of the Congress majority vote for non-cooperation, are relevant in the present context, only as exposing the hollowness of the claim that has been actually made that the Congress decision is not merely advisory but mandatory. But the above facts make it clear that

such a claim is utterly baseless and indefensible. The reformed Councils and the franchise that will constitute them into being, whatever their defects may be, do at least represent something which is definite and the result of a serious effort to represent all provinces, sections and interests, minorities included. And yet such is the perverse logic of party spirit that the representative character and claims of these reformed Councils are to be rejected because of a majority vote in (a notoriously unstable and unrepresentative informal assembly like the Congress.) Even a schoolboy debating society, one would have thought, would require a much higher percentage of votes to change its constitution than what this national assembly deemed fit, to accept a resolution inconsistent with the first article of its creed. Nevertheless we are not attempting to decide on the merits of non-cooperation simply on the precarious and unsatisfactory ground of the accident of the numbers that happened to vote or not vote at a particular session. We must proceed to state and analyse the contents of the new gospel of non-cooperation itself, in order to be able to pronounce on its inherent merits and decide on its claims to the allegiance of the Indian peoples.

The most authoritative pronouncement so far available on non-cooperation is surely the actual text of the Calcutta Special Congress resolution

which, as it was passed in its final form, runs as follows :—

“In view of the fact that on the Khilafat question both the Indian and Imperial Governments have signally failed in their duty towards the Musulmans of India, and the Prime Minister has deliberately broken his pledged word given to them and that it is the duty of every non-Moslem Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Musulman brother in his attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him ;

“And in view of the fact that in the matter of the events of the April of 1919 both the said Governments have grossly (neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour) towards them and have exonerated Sir (Michael O'Dwyer) who proved himself directly or indirectly responsible for most of the official crimes and callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration, and that the debate in (the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab and that the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of entire absence of repentance in the matters of the Khilafat and the Punjab ;

“This Congress is of opinion that there can be

no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swarajya. / This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open to the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established. |

“And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented opinion and inasmuch as Government consolidates its power through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, its law courts and its legislative Councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object, this Congress earnestly advises :—

- (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in Local Bodies ;
- (b) Refusal to attend Government Levees, Darbars and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour ;
- (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from

schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government and in place of such schools and colleges establishment of National schools and colleges in the various Provinces ;

- (d) Gradual boycott of British Courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes ;
- (e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia ;
- (f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election ;
- (g) The boycott of foreign goods ;

And in as much as non-co-operation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress, and inasmuch as an opportunity should be given in the very first stage of non-cooperation to every man, woman, and child for such discipline and self-sacrifice, this Congress advises adoption of

Swadeshi in piece goods on a vast scale, and inas-much as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation, and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, this Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand spinning in every home and hand weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement."

Having quoted the full text of the Calcutta Special Congress Resolution, let us proceed to analyse it in detail, so that we may be able to fasten on its essential elements. We may note the following points as significant in the actual text of the Resolution itself :—

(1) The opening clause of the resolution which assigns the first reason for non-co-operation, relates to the Khilafat question. This means that the first reason why the Indian peoples are asked to withdraw all voluntary support from the present Government is because it failed to upset an international decision as regards the fate of Turkey in accordance with the expressed wishes of a certain section of Indian Moslems. This, to say the least, looks farfetched and very indirect and not at all convincing. But in case the Khilafat appeal fails to evoke widespread res-

ponse, there is the second clause which enunciates a more immediate cause for non-co-operation which is calculated directly to appeal to Hindus as well as Moslems.

(2) In the text of this clause we may call attention to that part of it which speaks of the gross neglect or failure of the Indian and Imperial Governments to 'punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour' in the Punjab. The occurrence of the word 'punish' in the text of Mr. Gandhi's resolution is surprising. It clearly implies an unmistakable recognition even on Mr. Gandhi's part of the solemn duty of governments to punish guilty individuals. One wonders if Mr. Gandhi realised the exact implication of punishment by the state and how he would square it with his own emphatic gospel of non-violence towards evil. There is not a single word either in his Congress speech or his other utterances throwing any light on this obvious inconsistency.

(3) Also in the clause relating to the Punjab affair there is a pointed reference to the character of the debate in the House of Lords on the subject. We note the significant omission of any reference in the Congress Resolution or speeches to the more important debate in the House of Commons, and the strong indictment of the Punjab affair by responsible members and ministers and more especially His Majesty's Secretary of

State for India. There was a studied silence on this point of fact. We submit that this is intelligible only as deliberately intended to give the people of this country a very one-sided and misleading impression as to the attitude of the British Nation as a whole to the Punjab affair.

(4) The next clause in the Congress Resolution announces 'the attainment of Swarajya' as 'the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future. Here the attainment of Swarajya is definitely mentioned only as a means to an end and not as an end in itself intrinsically desirable. The wording of the clause clearly implies that the desire for Swarajya is not the real motive for Non-cooperation, but that it is desirable as the only means to vindicate national honour and redress the aforementioned wrongs. One wonders if this is a true or accurate statement of the inner intentions of the non-cooperation movement. There is much to lead one to suspect that it is not really so. One would have expected in any carefully thought-out and accurately worded statement of the grounds for non-cooperation according to a graded scale of their relative worth, the attainment of Swarajya would have figured in the forefront of their political programme and that the Khilafat and the Punjab affairs would have come in only as secondary incidents or occasions of subordinate

value and not as the real causes or main grounds for non-cooperation. But why has this not been done? One is led to suspect that perhaps the reason for this strange statement of the motives for non-cooperation in the resolution may lie in the awkward fact that (Swarajya simply means self-rule and is in no sense a new aim or ideal which is the recent discovery or special monopoly of non-cooperators,) but is believed in by others besides them, and is authoritatively laid down as the explicit goal of British policy in India, in the Government of India Act of 1919. So it would obviously have been inconvenient for non-cooperators to claim the goal of self-determination or responsible self-government as their specific ground for non-cooperation. (So they have assigned the Khilafat and the Punjab affairs as the real causes for non-cooperation.) (Nevertheless Swarajya is definitely mentioned in the resolution) In what relation then does Swarajya stand to non-cooperation? We are therefore driven to conclude that the allusion must be to some other kind of Swarajya than what is contemplated in the Government of India Act and believed in by other people besides non-cooperators. It is quite true that in the speech that Mr. Gandhi delivered in moving his non-cooperation resolution at the Calcutta Congress he said "I hold a real substantial unity between Hindus and Musulmans infinitely superior

to the British connection, and if I had to make a choice between that unity and the British connection I would have the first and reject the latter. If I had to choose between the honour of the Punjab, anarchy, neglect of education, shutting out of all legislative activity and British connection, I would choose the honour or the Punjab and all it meant, even anarchy, shutting out of all schools etc., without the slightest hesitation." When the text of the resolution is considered along with Mr. Gandhi's words, it seems as if the peculiarity of the non-cooperators' ideal of Swarajya, is that it contemplates either a total or at least a more complete severance of the British connection than anyone else holds to be desirable. If it be so, the least that the framers of the resolution could have done is to have made their intention explicit rather than wrap it up in the mystery of a misleading word of uncertain connotation thereby making people vote on they knew not what. After all Mr. Gandhi's words in his speech are not the Congress Resolution on which people voted, and his words commit no one but him. If the vote of the assembly on so important a point was worth taking at all, the intention ought to have been explicitly defined in the text of the resolution itself. This certainly was not done. If non-cooperators contend that absolute severance of the British connection is not what they intend, then they must explain wherein their

ideal of Swarajya differs from that recognised by others and enunciated by the Government itself as the goal of their policy in India. If they are not able to do this there is no point whatever in their bringing in the word Swarajya into the text of their resolution. (One cannot help feeling that perhaps the real truth is that non-cooperators have not yet made up their own minds as to what kind of Swarajya it is that they really want) and so have evaded putting it forward in the forefront of their political programme as the main motive for non-cooperation, and have quietly brought it in the middle of their resolution as if it were of value only as a means to a more ulterior end and left it there conveniently undefined. Even so it is a little difficult to see how the establishment of Swarajya in India, in any sense other than that contemplated by the Government of India Act itself as the goal of British policy in this land, would be a guarantee for securing the reversal of an international decision according to the wishes of a section of the Indian community. Also it is very difficult to understand, taking Mr. Gandhi's own words, how the prevalence of anarchy would help either to redress the alleged religious wrong done to Islam or vindicate the honour of the Punjab. Any one else would have thought that anarchy, far from remedying the evils in the past or preventing the recurrence of such in the future,

would have itself led directly to the perpetration of far graver religious wrongs in India itself and to far greater brutality and unmitigated suffering not only in the Punjab, but in the rest of India. If in the British connection there is no guarantee to prevent a repetition of wrongs, surely in anarchy there is not only no such guarantee whatsoever, but the absolute certainty of far graver wrongs and sure disaster. This whole passage in Mr. Gandhi's speech hardly seems to be the considered judgment of a constructive statesman or even a sober man, speaking with a full sense of responsibility. It looks as if it had been impulsively uttered in a fit of temper or on the spur of the moment and so it is not fair to him to take it seriously. Has Mr. Gandhi forgotten the terrible lesson of Indian History written in pages of blood ?

(5) In the next clause we are told that the resolution only contemplates the first instalment or a beginning in non-cooperation. The rest is yet to come and one wonders what it will be like. Meanwhile we desire to call attention here to the qualifying epithets 'progressive' and 'gradual' which are introduced into the text of the resolution obviously as a concession to the flesh and out of consideration for the weaker brethren. The same motive must have inspired the clause which runs "It is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least

sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object." These passages in the Resolution proposed by Mr. Gandhi are interesting as coming from one who has boasted that "expediency has no place in his scheme of things." But to be fair to him, we must note that the qualifying epithet 'gradual' is attached only to two items in the programme namely to the withdrawal of children from schools and colleges and the boycott of British courts. Also as regards Swadeshi Mr. Gandhi confessed that he was not responsible for its inclusion. (He regards the absolute boycott of foreign goods as a physical impossibility. But nevertheless it is included as the last item in the present programme of non-cooperation, for reasons that he said he would not go into.)

(6) Finally, we may note that the Congress Resolution explicitly uses the words earnestly advises' in commending the programme of non-cooperation. This is significant as in vivid contrast to the mandatory character claimed for the Congress Resolution subsequently.

A great deal of criticism both in the Special Congress and outside it has centred itself round the details of the non-cooperation programme, and on the advisability and practicability of particular steps in it, (more especially the withdrawal from schools and colleges and the boycott of British courts and the Reformed Councils. This paper

does not intend to go into a discussion of these details of particular items, but desires to concentrate on the main elements of the doctrine of non-violence and the principle of non-cooperation, which lie at the heart of the whole of Mr. Gandhi's present propaganda. In order to do so effectively we must ask what is the relation of Mr. Gandhi's new gospel to his political past. Is it the same as his Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa and the recent Satyagraha movement in India? If it is the same, in what respect precisely is it the same? If it is different, what exactly is the novel element or new point of departure? In short a satisfactory examination of the inner principles of his new method of political warfare, requires a clear preliminary analysis of its component elements of non-violence and non-cooperation respectively, and defining its precise relations to its forerunners namely Passive Resistance and Satyagraha. The further argument of this pamphlet will accordingly fall naturally into two sections, namely (1) An examination of the meaning of the doctrine of non-violence, and (2) A scrutiny of the implications of the new principle of non-cooperation.

II.

THE DOCTRINE OF NON-VIOLENCE.

The most striking feature in the public life and political teaching of Mr. Gandhi is his insistence on the supreme value of non-violence in individual as well as national matters as the best and in the last resort, as the only effective means of redress of wrongs. This underlies all that he has initiated so far the South African Passive Resistance, the Indian Satyagraha, and the more recent Non-cooperation Movements. 4117.

He himself says how one verse of a Gujarati poem which he had learnt as a child at school clung to him through life. Its substance was { "If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return that is nothing; real beauty consists in doing good against evil." } He says that this verse had a powerful influence over him and that even as a child he tried to carry it into practice. Besides this there were traditional anecdotes from the rich folklore of India in illustration of this same truth which he imbibed early in life. This early conviction was profoundly deepened and strengthened by his study of the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount and the life and example of Christ. He

was also greatly influenced by the writings of the American Thoreau and the Englishman Ruskin, and most of all by the life and teaching of the Russian reformer Tolstoi. The Passive Resistance Movement in England practised by English Non-Conformists with regard to the Education Act proved a striking object lesson to him. He had a magnificent opportunity of practising this principle during his heroic struggle for the recognition of the political rights and status of British Indian subjects in South Africa, where his greatest political triumphs have so far been achieved.

Describing the origin of the Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi said to his friend and biographer the Rev. Joseph Doke, a Baptist minister in Johannesburg, "Some years ago when I began to take an active part in the public life of Natal, the adoption of this method occurred to me as the best course to pursue, should petitions fail.....In Johannesburg when the Asiatic Registration Act was introduced, the Indian community was so deeply stirred and so knit together in a common determination to resist it, that the moment seemed opportune.....So I proposed this pathway of suffering, and after much discussion it was adopted. In September 1906 there was a large gathering of Indians in the old Empire Theatre, when the position was thoroughly faced, and under

the inspiration of deep feeling and on the proposal of one of our leading men, they swore a solemn oath committing themselves to Passive Resistance.

It must be remembered that these people had no vote in Parliament, no means open that would obtain redress for them in the Constitution of the Government of South Africa. So Mr. Gandhi proposed to them this pathway of suffering and honourable protest. Among the gains of this struggle in South Africa, summarised by Mr. Gandhi himself in the Indian Review Numbers for November and December 1911, the following are worthy of note :—

“That it has created feelings of sympathy and regard for Indians.”

That thereby the Indian community has gained a great deal of prestige, and that those Europeans who before the struggle used to treat Indians with contempt have been taught to show them due regard and consideration.”

“That the majority of the Indians domiciled in the country showed themselves quite cowardly before the struggle. That although on account of the struggle some of them had lost almost all their earthly possessions they feel that as a consequence thereof they have acquired much strength of mind and character which they could not have purchased with any amount of money, and which

nothing but the actual struggle could have infused into them.’’

“That before the struggle, all laws used to be framed against us independently of us and what we thought of them, but that since the struggle the authorities are obliged to take our views and feelings into their consideration and they certainly show more regard to them.”

“That the community has demonstrated to the world the invulnerability of truth, and vindicated the glory of religion. Where there is truth and where there is religion, there alone is victory.”

No one can read these noble words describing the honourable outcome of the great and heroic struggle of South African Indians, without being profoundly stirred and impressed by it. From this account it is clear that the essential elements in that struggle of Passive Resistance are as follows :—

(1) Refusal to obey or submit to an unjust law, thereby vindicating the sacred obligation to one's conscience ; (2) consequent voluntary enduring of the penalty of disobedience, thereby showing at the same time one's reverence for and recognition of the mandates of the state, which is the embodiment of the larger will of the community ; (3) thus winning the moral sympathy of the world by such a spectacle of unmerited suffering ; and (4) this is intended to shame the aggressor into

penitence or produce a real change of heart in those responsible for the unjust law.

In the judgment of all right thinking people Mr. Gandhi's effort in South Africa on behalf of his fellow Indian countrymen, and more especially the novel and striking method that he adopted stands vindicated as essentially right and noble. It was unquestionably the best method open to a community like the British Indians, situated as they were in a minority in a foreign land without any representation or voice in the Government or constitutional means of redress open to them. The great and honourable part which Mr. Gandhi played in the South African struggle has justly won for him much fame and universal respect from far and wide and a halo of glory, so much so that his name has become a magic word to conjure with in any appeal to the masses of our people. The late Mr. Gokhale has borne eloquent testimony to this fact in mémorable words which we may quote here with perfect approval. "He is without doubt made of the stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made. Nay, more. (He has in him the marvellous spiritual power to turn ordinary men around him into heroes and martyrs.)"

But his South African experience is the key alike to the strength as well as the weakness of Mr. Gandhi. His whole mind and outlook seem coloured and obsessed with an exaggerated sense

of the absolute value and universal applicability of the method that he so successfully and usefully adopted in South Africa. Even in his South African utterances especially those of a later date, one can trace the growth of a clear tendency to generalise uncritically from the limited circumstances and conditions of his South African environment to all circumstances whatsoever without pausing to consider or make adequate allowance for altered conditions. In this he was encouraged by the blind enthusiasm of ardent admirers who sought advice from him as from an oracle. So it was very natural for him to yield to such friendly pressure and indulge in sweeping generalisations. What else would one expect? He was undoubtedly powerfully influenced by the vivid experiences that had been burnt into his soul in that struggle that absorbed so many of the best years of his manhood there. But however natural it may be for him to think in terms of the particular categories and the limited experiences of his South African campaign, it is in no sense a justification of their universal validity or a warrant for their applicability to the very different conditions of British India. Let us proceed to trace the gradual development of this tendency to generalise in his thought.

(Mr. Gandhi has never attempted any comprehensive or systematic statement of the exact

scope and value of his method of Passive Resistance in any of his writings.) So we have to gather the trend of his thought from stray utterances and scattered scraps, and piece them together in order to get anything like a coherent idea. In an address delivered in 1909 before a European audience at the Germiston (Transvaal) Literary and Debating Society, we find him already seeking to evolve a universal theory out of his experience. In that address he complains that the expression Passive Resistance is really a misnomer, but he says that he has accepted it as it was popular and in use to denote what was intended, which could be much better expressed by the term "soul force". So also he said that active resistance could be better expressed by the term "body force." It is easy to see, he claimed, that soul force was infinitely superior to body force, that if only people resorted to soul force in order to secure redress of wrongs much of the present suffering would be avoided, that like virtue it is its own reward, and that there is no such thing as failure in the use of this kind of force. In this speech it is clear that he has already begun to think in terms of the sharp and clear cut antithesis of soul force versus bodily force, which we shall examine critically in a future page.

Also in 1909 he wrote to his friend and biographer the Rev. Joseph Doke, in reply to a request from him to send a message to his Indian country-

men with reference to the unrest in India at that time, “I am not sure that I have any right to send a message to those with whom I have never come into personal contact, but it has been desired and I consent. These then are my thoughts. The struggle in the Transvaal is not without its interest for India. . . . We have undertaken the struggle on the following assumptions :—(1) Passive Resistance is always infinitely superior to physical force. (2) There is no inherent barrier between the European and the Indian anywhere. (3) It would be a calamity to break the connection between the British people and the people of India. If we are treated as, or assert our right to be treated as free men, whether in India or elsewhere, the connection between the British people and the people of India can not only be mutually beneficial, but is calculated to be of enormous advantage to the world religiously, and therefore socially and politically. In my opinion each nation is the complement of the other. . . . Passive Resistance may be a slow remedy, not only for our ills in the Transvaal, but for all the political and other troubles from which our people suffer in India.” In this statement we notice a praiseworthy hesitation to make any hasty inferences as to situations outside his own experience, and also a frank avowal of his faith in the potentiality for good of the British connection with India, which are of interest as

contrasted with his most recent utterances concerning the Indian situation. Further we note that he definitely states here his belief that Passive Resistance may prove a valuable remedy for all ills whether in the Transvaal or in British India. This shows that in spite of his hesitation at first he has yielded to the temptation to generalise.

In the same year he sent a message to the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress which was published in the Indian Review for December 1909. There again he says :—"I do not know that I am at all competent to send any message. . . . At the present moment I am unable to think of anything but the task immediately before me, namely the struggle that is going on in the Transvaal. . . . The sons of Hindustan who are in the Transvaal are showing that they are capable of fighting for an ideal pure and simple. . . . Violence in any shape or form is entirely eschewed. They believe that self-suffering is the only true and effective means to procure lasting reforms. They endeavour to meet and conquer hatred by love. They oppose the brute or physical force by soul force. They hold that loyalty to an earthly sovereign or an earthly constitution is subordinate to loyalty to God and His constitution. . . . Hence in resisting or disregarding these man-made laws which they consider to be inconsistent with the eternal laws of God, they

accept with resignation the penalties provided by the former, and trust to the working of time and to the best in human nature to make good their position. If they are wrong, they alone suffer and the established order of things continues. . . . Incidentally the Hindu-Muhammadan problem has been solved in South Africa. We realise there that the one cannot do without the other. . . . May I also suggest that in pondering over and concentrating our attention on Passive Resistance such as has been described above, we would perchance find out that for the many ills we suffer from in India, Passive Resistance is an infallible panacea. It is worthy of careful study, and I am sure it will be found that it is the only weapon that is suited to the genius of our people and our land ; which is the nursery of the most ancient religions and has very little to learn from modern civilisation—a civilisation based on violence of the blackest type, largely a negation of the divine in man, and which is rushing headlong to its own ruin.”

Here we note at first once more on Mr. Gandhi's part a laudable strain of hesitation to generalise and a candid confession that he is unable to think of anything but the task immediately before him. Nevertheless we find him gradually led to think that what the sons of Hindustan have accomplished in South Africa may easily be achieved in British India also by the same methods, as is

evident from the concluding sentences of his message, in which he makes bold to say that Passive Resistance may prove "an infallible panacea for the many ills we suffer from in India." One feels quite reasonably sceptical about panaceas which quack doctors are only too ready to manufacture and foist on a credulous world. All such panaceas are open to the one initial fundamental objection of not discriminating between different kinds of ailments, for all of which they are claimed to be the one sovereign infallible remedy. In all fairness and sincerity one wonders if Mr. Gandhi with his panacea of Passive Resistance, now renamed doctrine of non-violence, is after all anything more than a quack politician who is illegitimately generalising empirically on the limited basis of his South African experiences. The note of positive certainty in the concluding sentence of his message in which he says "I am sure that it is the only weapon suited to the genius of our people and our land" is in curious contrast to the note of modest hesitation with which he begins his message. This inconsistency only betrays the wavering in his own mind at that time, indicating the unconscious mental transition of the South African hero of Passive Resistance to what he has since become the leading politician in India claiming to hold in his hands a universal panacea or sovereign remedy for all the ills afflicting

the motherland. Also the indictment in scathing unmeasured terms and in indiscriminating superlatives of modern civilisation sounds incompatible with the earlier passage already quoted concerning the high destiny and possibilities to the world of the British connection with India. Finally, we must refer to his claim that the Hindu-Moslem problem has been solved in South Africa. We suspect that the ease with which Hindus and Moslems were able to throw in their lot together in a foreign land, where they were a handful and suffering from the same common ills, has misled Mr. Gandhi into thinking that the problem of Hindu-Moslem unity in India is far simpler and less complicated than it really is, and has blinded him from seeing the obvious differences between the two situations. In short, we claim that the whole text of this message is significant as giving support to our hypothesis that the key to Mr. Gandhi's present political propaganda is to be found in the fact that he is trying to solve the complex and gigantic problems of the Indian political situation in the simple and meagre terms and inadequate categories of his early South African experience.

In order to mark Mr. Gandhi's departure from South Africa a richly illustrated golden number of "Indian Opinion", the paper he had founded to give expression to the grievances of British Indian subjects in South Africa, was brought out

as a souvenir of the Passive Resistance movement. In this special number there is a contribution from Mr. Gandhi's own pen with the ambitious title of "The Theory and Practice of Passive Resistance." There is no illuminating exposition of theory nor systematic laying down of principles for practice as the title of the article may lead one to expect. It contains a number of stray thoughts loosely strung together without any very definitely intelligible sequence or logical coherence. In this article he once more claims that Truth-Force, Soul-Force or Love-Force would be a more appropriate name for what is popularly miscalled Passive Resistance. The use of the expression Truth-Force here is suggestive as foreshadowing what he later on called Satyagraha. Then he lays it down dogmatically that "this force is independent of pecuniary or other material assistance ; certainly even in its elementary form of physical force or violence. Indeed violence is the negation of this great spiritual force which can only be cultivated or wielded by those who will entirely eschew violence. It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak as they are not capable of meeting

violence with violence. This superstition arises from the incompleteness of the English expression. It is impossible for those who consider themselves to be weak to apply this force. Only those who realise that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him, and that the latter always yields to it, can effectually be passive resisters. This force is to violence and therefore to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is to darkness. In politics its use is based upon the immutable maxim that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed."

Right through this whole passage runs the self-same uncritical assumption of a sharp unreconciled antithesis between what he calls soul force and what he calls brute force. The very last sentence of the passage quoted in which he speaks of government being possible only so long as it rests on the consent of the governed, is significant as the germ out of which has developed the present non-cooperation movement which seeks to paralyse the entire machinery of the State by withdrawing the consent of the governed. Further at the end of the same article he says "one of the reasons for my departure to India is still further to realise, as I already do in part, my own imperfection as a passive resister and then to try to perfect myself, for I believe that it is in India

that the nearest approach to perfection is possible. This is a clear confession of the fact that before he ever returned to India and studied her special and complicated problems, he had already made up his mind that in order to "perfect himself", he would try passive resistance on a grander scale than was possible in South Africa. His subsequent career in India and the line that he has persisted in taking in the teeth of all opposition and advice to the contrary, are perfectly intelligible in the light of this confession. It is only fair to remind the vast masses of our countrymen of this fixed premeditated purpose on Mr. Gandhi's part to practise Passive Resistance here on a grander scale than was possible for him elsewhere, quite apart from the special needs and particular circumstances of the Indian political situation. This lends support to a serious suspicion on our part that Mr. Gandhi is only playing with Indian politics as a means to some more ulterior end or fad of his own, namely the supposed religious value of Passive Resistance in itself. Let the people of India remember this significant confession which in effect amounts to a determination on his part to carry on experiments in Passive Resistance at their cost, and let them make up their minds whether they are willing to be made pawns in the game, even though it be played with religious zeal for a supposed spiritual end.

After his departure from South Africa, and just before his return to India Mr. Gandhi said in the course of a speech delivered at a farewell reception held in his honour in England that he had been in exile from India for 25 years and that his friend and master Mr. Gokhale had warned him not to speak on Indian questions as India was a foreign land to him. Also after his return to India at the beginning of an address condemning anarchial crimes delivered at the Students' Hall in Calcutta, Mr. Gandhi said "Though it is the command of my guru, the late Mr. Gokhale that I, during my stay here, should keep my ears open and my mouth shut, I could not resist the temptation of addressing this meeting." This shows that the far-sighted statesman whom Mr. Gandhi still professes to revere as his guru saw the absolute necessity for Mr. Gandhi's patiently studying the Indian political situation, before his plunging headlong into it with his preformed ideas. The confession contained in this speech, as well as his other utterances and activities so soon after his return to India, show how little heed was paid to the grave warning and solemn advice of his political guru. We who are now reaping the full harvest of his disregard of that wholesome advice, know that this is but one more proof of the fact that he had already made up his mind and was so convinced of the universal validity of the lessons of his South

African experience that he could not see the necessity for any such precaution, and was impatient to preach and practise the same in India.

(Not long after his return he took a leading part in the labour trouble that occurred in the Champaran district in Behar, and in the grave situation that arose in the district of Kaira in Gujarat in the year 1916-1917, owing to failure of crops.) In the latter place there was a dispute between the Government and the agriculturists as to the revenue derivable from that area. The ryots contended that the government estimates were wrong and unfair and Mr. Gandhi straight away advocated passive resistance and non-payment of taxes as the best means of redress. This event is important as his first essay in Passive Resistance in British India. Here we may mention a passage in his reply to the press-note on this subject issued by the Bombay Government in which he says "Merely to show how hopelessly misleading the press-note is, I may state that the Gujarat Sabha did not pass a resolution advising Passive Resistance. Not that it would have shirked it, but I felt myself that Passive Resistance should not be made the subject of a resolution in the Sabha, whose constitution was governed by the rule of majority, and so the Gujarat Sabha's resolution left it open to individual members to follow their

bent of mind." We quote this passage to show how far Mr. Gandhi has travelled since then, and how much less scrupulous he is now than he was then as to the spiritual nature of his mission and the questionable moral value of getting support for it by majority votes, even though the resolutions be only advisory in character. The attitude then revealed stands in vivid contrast to the majority vote and victory that he worked for and obtained at the recent Calcutta Special Congress.

Further we may call attention to an article by him, originally published in Gujarati on 'Soul Force and Indian Politics' in which he discourses on the value of his Passive Resistance method which he definitely renamed Satyagraha or Truth Force, as a weapon in Indian political struggles. This was written on the occasion of the agitation caused by the internment order of the Madras Government in June 1917. In the course of this article he says "Truth Force is Soul Force and is the opposite of the force of arms. The former is a purely religious instrument ; its conscious use is therefore possible only in men religiously minded. If so, one wonders what Mr. Gandhi has to say now of the support of those who he admits believe in violence, but only follow him because no other course is open to them. Further in the same article he says "Both soul-force and force of arms are from time immemorial. Both have received their due meed of praise in the

accepted religious literature. They respectively represent forces of good and evil.....Either of these is preferable to rank cowardice. Neither Swarajya nor an awakening among us is possible without resort to one or the other. Swarajya is not Swarajya which is gained without action. Such Swarajya could make no impression on the people. [No awakening is possible without the people at large realising their power." In this passage the attainment of Swarajya is definitely assigned by Mr. Gandhi as the main motive of his movement, though in the further development of it in the present non-cooperation movement (we are seriously asked to believe that the Khilafat and the Punjab affairs are the main causes and that Swarajya is only a means for the ends involved in them.)

Again, in the course of the same article he says "the sooner the spirit of Passive Resistance pervades the atmosphere, the better it is. It will bless both the Raj and the Raiyat. A passive resister never wants to embarrass a government or anybody else. He does not act thoughtlessly. He is never insolent. He therefore shuns boycott, but takes the Swadeshi vow as a part of his religion and never wavers in practising it." Obviously Mr. Gandhi can no longer make some of these claims at any rate for his movement. His Congress resolution actually sought a majority vote to advise definite boycott, and far from not wanting

to embarrass Government it openly aims at paralysing it.

In November 1917 presiding over the First Gujerat Political Conference he said "I am but a baby of two years and a half in Indian politics. I cannot trade here on my experience in South Africa. I know that my acceptance of this position is to a certain extent an impertinence. And yet I have been unable to resist the pressure your overwhelming affection has exerted on me." This statement clearly shows that he had still left in him some qualms of conscience, at times at least, as to his unfitness to tackle the Indian political situation with the limited experience at his disposal. In the course of the same speech he makes another significant confession which is in radical contrast to his more recent attitude. He says there "That the whole of India will ever accept Satyagraha is beyond my imagination." Yet within two years of that utterance this infant in Indian politics is confidently preaching an extreme gospel of non-violent non-cooperation as the only hope of political redemption to the whole country. Let this fact speak for itself.

We cannot omit in this review of the development of Mr. Gandhi's thought his establishment of what he called the Satyagrahashrama the object of which he stated is "to learn to serve the motherland and to serve it." In order to

learn how to serve the country various observances were laid down as necessary. In the forefront stands the vow of truth. By the vow of truth is meant not the intellectual quest for insight into reality, but simply the moral virtue of truthfulness. It is described in exacting terms so as to admit of no deception being practised even for the good of the country. Here, firstly we ask if the intellectual quest after truth has no place in his scheme for the country's service. Further, is there not a touch of unreality in Mr. Gandhi asking for and obtaining majority votes in what according to himself ought to be a matter of conscience, and in accepting the allegiance and support of those who on their own profession do not share his convictions, but are only making a convenience of him and his teaching? The second observance enjoined in the Satyagraha Home is called "Ahimsa") It means literally non-killing. But it is used by Mr. Gandhi in a wider sense to stand for his principle of non-violence. Commenting on it we are told that "The follower of this vow may not hurt even those he believes to be unjust; he may not be angry with them, he must love them". This requirement is again in startling contrast to some of the choice epithets which Mr. Gandhi himself has hurled at what he calls "This Satanic Government" in his recent speeches. These two are the main principles of Satyagraha. Then follow four other vows which are

of subordinate importance and need not be considered here.

Though the Satyagraha Home was founded at Ahmedabad not very long after his arrival in India, yet what he called the Satyagraha Movement was inaugurated and used as a definite weapon for aggressive political purposes only in the early part of last year when he thought that the non-official opposition in the Viceroy's Legislative Council was unable to prevent the passing of the Rowlatt Bills. As an effective protest against this legislation he urged upon the Indian peoples a Satyagraha pledge vowing civil disobedience to "these laws and such other laws as a committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and promising to follow faithfully truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property. At that time he was warned by some of the most experienced and best known political leaders in the country against the possible consequences of this course of action as likely to prove inimical to the best interests of the country. But he replied that it was a matter of conscience with him which he described as "a call which is the highest of all." We shall at a further stage of our argument expose the weakness of this exaggerated claim made on behalf of the individual conscience and the comparative insensibility in Mr. Gandhi and others who think like him to the solemn obligations to that larger objective conscience of the

community which is incarnate in constituted authority.

But as soon as Mr. Gandhi heard of the riots and the consequent bloodshed in different places, he sent out what was after all a belated message condemning in the strongest terms those who in the name of Satyagraha had resorted to violence, in the course of which he said "If we cannot conduct this movement without the slightest violence from our side, the movement might have to be abandoned or it may be necessary to give it a different and still more restricted shape. It may be necessary to go even further. The time may come for me to offer Satyagraha against ourselves. . . . But if those who are not Satyagrahis, who shall not have joined the movement, who are even against the movement, received any injury at all, every Satyagrahi will be responsible for that sinful injury. My responsibility will be a million times heavier. I have embarked upon the struggle with a due sense of responsibility. . . . Against ourselves what kind of Satyagraha can I offer excepting that it is for me to fast and if need be by so doing to give up this body and thus prove the truth of Satyagraha." What good could Mr. Gandhi's fasting or even voluntary death do to the mischief already wrought. Obviously they could not undo what had been done. Within a few days, Mr. Gandhi was forced by the trend of events to send out a

letter advising the temporary suspension of civil disobedience, in the course of which he admitted "I am sorry when I embarked upon a mass movement, I underrated the forces of evil and I must now pause and consider how best to meet the situation." The letter concluded with the following sentence "The main and only purpose of this letter is to advise all Satyagrahis to temporarily suspend civil disobedience, to give Government effective cooperation in restoring order and by preaching and practice to gain adherence to the fundamental principles mentioned above." Also in the course of a speech delivered about the same time at Ahmedabad he said "It seems that the deeds I have complained of have been done in an organised manner. There seems to be a design about them, and I am sure that there must be some educated and clever man or men behind them." One would have thought that last year's tragedy would have proved a wholesome object lesson to him as to the grave danger of setting a going in an irresponsible manner forces which he could not control and which may be availed of by unscrupulous interested parties for ends which may be the very reverse of what he is professing.

But instead of increased caution and hesitation on Mr. Gandhi's part, what do we actually find? We find him launching out in barely over a year's time into a more desperate and revolutionary ad-

venture that aims at subverting the entire existing order of things, than any that even he had ever been associated with before. This time it is not simple disobedience to some laws, but a deliberate attempt to undermine and withdraw all voluntary co-operation such as makes the existence and continuance of the State possible. So far Mr. Gandhi the Passive Resister has at least sought consistently to avoid playing into the hands of unscrupulous violence and never aimed at any harm or injury to the State or the established order or at those who did not share his convictions or who were opposed to him, but only sought to win his way by the possible spiritual consequences of his self-suffering which sought to evoke moral sympathy from the world and to touch the heart of the aggressor and produce a genuine penitence in him. From the passages that we have already quoted from Mr. Gandhi's own past utterances it would be clear that he has claimed that soul force and self-suffering in themselves are unconquerable and if practised in perfect faith will overcome all obstacles and achieve the end, without upsetting or injuring in any way the established order of things or any but those who willingly make the sacrifice. But through his present scheme of Non-cooperation he is definitely aiming at paralysing the State and its activities and so evidently holds now that nothing short of this is adequate for the realisation of the highest ends

of the Indian peoples. We submit that this involves a complete change of front on his part and places him on the horns of a logical dilemma. He must either admit that he was hastily generalising formerly when he talked of self-suffering and his moral weapons as a sufficient and that in the light of further experience and changed conditions he finds his old principles inadequate, or that in his present attempt to injure the state by seeking to paralyse it, he has definitely abandoned the exalted spiritual character of the fight that he has so far claimed to put forth for the redress of all wrongs and resorted to coercion. Inexorable logic demands that he cannot have it both ways and leaves him no loophole of escape. He himself has stated in the most emphatic and unqualified manner in his paper on 'Soul-Force and Indian Politics,' "petitions and the like are a remedy for endurable grievances. For the unendurable passive resistance alone is the remedy. . . Such self-surrender is the most effective demonstration of the people's desire and before it the mightiest power must bend. Such is my unalterable faith in the efficacy of soul-force." At present he is obviously trying to do something more than merely passively resist and seek through self-suffering to bring about a spiritual change. He is openly seeking to injure and paralyse the forces that he is opposed to. This means either that his "unalterable faith in soul-force" has altered or that

he is self-condemned in his present enterprise.

But this obvious change of front and glaring inconsistency on his part may be disguised from his own eyes, by the fact that he is still emphasising what he calls the non-violent character of his present movement, and that any injury that may result to the existing order of things is produced only through a spiritual withdrawal of consent on the part of the governed and not through any resort to physical violence. Here we submit that Mr. Gandhi is the unfortunate victim of a fatal confusion of thought. The point is that through attempting to paralyse the State, he is certainly resorting to a form of coercion and therefore violence and not depending solely, as he has so long professed to do, on spiritual means of seeking to produce moral results. Now the whole issue resolves itself into the question of whether there is any real difference in principle between coercion by non-physical means and coercion by physical means.

In order to answer this question it is necessary to make the issues clear by examining at close quarters the distinction between coercion by physical means and coercion by non-physical means. He evidently thinks that the two are as poles apart and that he is still consistent with his former professions in so far as he eschews physical violence? Is he right in thinking so? Or is he not really guilty of a serious error of judgment which has in

reality destroyed the exalted spiritual character and ethical value of what he has so far striven for?

By physical violence or coercion by physical means must be understood all forms of personal injury to or assault on the body or property of one's opponents such as maiming or murdering or robbing them of the means of sustenance or the fruits of labour or their legitimate material possessions. By mental violence or coercion by non-physical means must be understood all forms of social pressure other than those evoking rational persuasion or moral penitence on the one hand and exerting physical coercion on the other. We mean by this all attempts to override another's will either through such ordinary means as insult or intimidation or social boycott calculated to produce acute mental anguish or despair or heart-break or mutations of personality, or by extraordinary hypnotic suggestion or supernormal control over another. Of these two forms of coercion, who can say which is better and which is worse? In neither case is there room for freedom. Both are undoubtedly forms of coercion and as such do violence to one's personality and freedom of choice.

Mr. Gandhi seems to use the word violence in a conveniently restricted sense as meaning only coercion by physical means. He is not entitled to do this. We can just as well, if not better, coerce by non-physical means and override or terrorise

others and thereby do damaging violence to their personalities than merely by physical assault. Judged by results at any rate, violence by non-physical means seems to be far worse and more cruel and disastrous in its consequences than physical coercion, as it is calculated to cause more poignant suffering and provoke far greater bitterness, resentment and hardness of heart. If anything, the chances of a genuine change of heart or moral reformation or spiritual regeneration are further than ever. All results attained by coercion, whether through physical or non-physical means, involve in their several measure violence to another's will or outrage on his personality, and so must be pronounced to be radically different in nature from the spiritual result of a genuine change of heart that moral persuasion implies. So we must conclude that Mr. Gandhi's present Non-cooperation movement, far from being non-violent in character as he claims, is itself intended and calculated to do undeniable violence. The utmost that he can claim is that it does not attempt violence by physical means. But this is beside the point. In seeking to paralyse the State by withdrawing the voluntary consent of the governed, he is obviously seeking to coerce or do violence by non-physical means. If Non-cooperation does not aim at this, it aims at nothing. So we contend that the two choice negative epithets by which he has chosen to

designate his movement namely 'non-violent' and non-cooperation are mutually destructive and self-contradictory.

In advocating non-cooperation and aiming at paralysing the State, Mr. Gandhi has really abandoned and proved false to the exalted spiritual and ethical character of the mission he has so far professed, and descended into the common arena of seeking to employ methods of coercion. Whether the method employed is physical or non-physical, is quite irrelevant to the issue and does not make the smallest difference to the fact that the result is sought to be obtained not by moral conversion and consent or by spiritual persuasion produced by our own self-suffering or sacrifice, but through coercion and violence overriding another's will. So Mr. Gandhi must either admit that moral persuasion through self-suffering is not so universally applicable and efficacious as he formerly professed or that he has abandoned his exalted spiritual mission and stooped to lower methods of expediency.

Besides this, we must probe further into the meaning of the antithesis between physical and non-physical, between body-force and soul-force, on which he has laid so much stress and which has brought him and his cause a large measure of sympathy to which he is no longer legitimately entitled. The world which loves easy clear-cut distinctions is apt to think that this heroic solitary indi-

vidual represents moral right while the State or the powers against which he is struggling represent only physical might or brute force. Such an antithesis is neither true nor fair. By contrasting bodily might with moral right one is naturally led to conclude that bodily might is the opposite of moral right, that it is something inherently and essentially wrong in itself. This is a position clearly implied in the whole of Mr. Gandhi's propaganda as the necessary presupposition of all his thought and activities. But it will not bear examination for one single instant. Why should might or power or force, even when it is qualified by the epithet 'bodily' be regarded as something which is the opposite of ethical right and consequently morally wrong in itself? We are unwilling to believe that Mr. Gandhi seriously holds that bodily might is something inherently and essentially evil, though he has given ample room for such a misunderstanding by his constant and never-tiring insistence on the opposition between the two.

Perhaps it would be fairer to his intention, though not to his expressions, to take him as holding that strictly speaking it is not bodily might as such that is wrong in itself, but only such might as is used for the service of a wrong end. If so, the real opposition is no longer between moral right and bodily might but between right ends and wrong ends. What then is the place of bodily might in

the scheme of things and in relation to these right ends and wrong ends? Mr. Gandhi would be forced to take refuge in saying that bodily might or brute force is not something inherently wrong and essentially the opposite of right, but something which is morally neutral and colourless in itself, neither good nor bad, and which becomes good or bad according as it is wedded to good or bad ends. This is what clearness of thought and accuracy of expression would lead him to hold.

But this paper contends that even this is an erroneous and indefensible view of the true and ultimate nature of bodily might or brute force. We maintain as against Mr. Gandhi that bodily might or brute force truly conceived is not the opposite of right, nor something neutral and colourless and indifferent which is neither right nor wrong, but can be shown indisputably to be itself intrinsically right and essentially good. We hold in short that might properly conceived is a form of right and that brute force is itself a form of soul force. How can this be?

In order to answer this question we must enquire into the precise meaning of what is vaguely called bodily might or brute force. We regret that Mr. Gandhi has nowhere thought it worth his while to attempt a precise definition of what he has nevertheless so vigorously condemned in such scathing terms. We venture to think that had he

attempted any such clear definition of what he calls bodily might or brute force, he would have come to a very different conclusion and would have been forced by the sheer necessities of thought and the inexorable laws of logic to modify considerably, if not withdraw wholly, his so-called gospel of non-violence. It behoves us to do what he has not done, namely to attempt a clear and precise determination of the meaning of bodily might or brute force in order to expose the unsound and indefensible principles on which his whole method of political warfare is based from beginning to end without exception.

What precisely then is bodily might or brute force? In the present context at least three distinct meanings of the term may be usefully distinguished as relevant to our present discussion. The word might in its ultimate and primitive connotation may be taken to mean primarily muscular force or energy that is the native strength or dynamic power stored in one's own muscular system. Then the word with the progress of civilisation has attained a more extended and supplementary significance in the sense of armed force. This connotes not merely the native energy of our own muscular system, but also the added and extended energy available for man by manipulating and harnessing natural forces for human ends. The man who for the first time picked up a stone and flung it at a wild

beast or enemy had made a great and far-reaching discovery and attained a new and higher conception of the meaning of bodily might or physical force than he who simply depended on the native energy of his muscles alone. This is the historic beginning of man's grand and glorious conquest over nature and the ultimate source of all our modern implements and tools such as swords, gunpowder, machinery and so forth. But this is not the highest or final meaning of bodily might or force available for us. There is a yet higher conception possible for man and attainable by him. This may be designated organised force. It means not simply the solitary muscular energy of a single individual which we call muscular force, nor even the extended energy available by the use of tools, implements and inventions which involve the harnessing of natural objects to human ends, but the yet larger and more comprehensive vision of the co-ordinated strength of a vast multitude of many individuals in the unity of a single purpose. Such organised force in its highest and most permanent forms is not the achievement of any one class or clique or group or even generation of individuals, but the solid achievement of all generations handed down in unbroken continuity as a sacred heritage to be received, augmented and handed on from age to age. Thus regarded, we see the true meaning of bodily might in its historic development,

which Mr. Gandhi light-heartedly dismisses with the contemptuous epithet of brute force.

Taken in this sense, we contend that what is called bodily might or brute force can be shown to be indisputably a right and inherently a good. How can this be? Let us take the primitive meaning of bodily might as muscular force. What is a muscle? How did it come to be? What does it represent? In what does its energy or force consist? The only answer possible for the educated modern mind is to interpret muscle biologically as a type or form of protoplasmic matter evolved to meet or fulfil certain organic necessities. Therefore, every muscle represents a fulfilled organic need, and hence is a good. Next let us take the second and more extended meaning of bodily might as armed force. What do the various arms, tools, implements, instruments and inventions which the ingenuity of man has devised represent? Obviously they must be regarded as natural objects which have become man's armed force only in so far as they minister to human need or fulfil human ends; and therefore we infer again that every tool or instrument or piece of machinery which constitutes armed force represents a fulfilled human need or realised human end and hence is a human good. Lastly we come to the meaning of might as organised force. This is not merely a new and different connotation of the term bodily might.

If truly regarded it, represents a higher development of meaning which includes within its comprehensive sweep the earlier connotations of might as muscular force and as armed force. In short, organised force includes within itself not only the muscular energies of all the individuals in a community but also the collective result represented by the sum total of tools, implements and inventions which are the achievements of all generations in the past. It represents the coordination of all the available strength or past achievement in a community in definite visible effectual forms. Thus organised force takes flesh and blood or incarnates itself not only in the ordered life of a country in its agricultural, industrial and commercial systems, its literary, scientific, artistic and religious traditions, but also in the various institutions of the State, such as its legislature, its executive, its administrative machinery and its various punitive forces such as its judiciary, its police, its army, its navy, and we may add its air-force. We maintain in opposition to Mr. Gandhi's shortsighted and narrow-mined individualism that these ancient and honourable institutions of the State and the community do not represent something which is the opposite of right and good, nor something which is neutral and indifferent and which is neither right nor wrong, but are themselves concrete embodiments of what has proved itself to be fulfilled need or realised end

or concretised right or actualised good in the accumulated experience of all generations of the race and which must form the necessary basis or foundation of all true further progress. But even this is not enough. We must push the question further in order to expose thoroughly the fatal fallacy that vitiates Mr. Gandhi's whole position. In order to do so, let us ask definitely what then is the meaning of the popular antithesis between bodily might and moral right, between brute-force and soul-force on which Mr. Gandhi so confidently builds his whole position.

Often in life we come across the phenomenon of a strong man or powerful group of men striving for a wrong end, and opposed to them stands the still small voice of conscience or the solitary protest of some one single individual or small group of individuals crying like a voice in the wilderness. This spectacle is likely to impress itself on the popular imagination as a striking instance or vivid illustration of the antithesis of bodily might and moral right or brute-force and soul-force. But such a judgment is superficial and really based on a confusion of thought and will not bear examination. It is quite true, and we may admit it readily, that bodily might is our often seen wedded to what is clearly and obviously wrong, against which it is our duty as well as privilege to fight. But it is imperative that we should clearly

grasp what exactly we are fighting against. We must distinguish between the bodily might or strength on the one hand and the wrong end for which it is being exploited on the other. The bodily might or physical strength is in itself a right or a good as we have already shown. It represents achieved good or realised ends. What is wrong is clearly not in the bodily might as such, but only in the illegitimate end, to achieve which it is now sought to be utilised. The struggle in life is always a struggle of ends, of right ends versus wrong ends. If we seek to achieve a wrong end with the available stock of energy at our disposal, the quarrel is with the wrongness of the end which we are seeking, and not with the store of strength or achieved good at our disposal. But popular thought never takes the trouble to distinguish clearly in this manner between end and means and apprise the precise nature and value of each.

Let us illustrate the truth of what we have stated so far in the abstract, by one or two vivid concrete examples. Let us consider a band of robbers. There is strength in them and that strength is definitely used for a wrong end to appropriate the fruits of the labour of others, to which they have no reasonable right or just claim. Let us ask what exactly should be our verdict on such a band. It is clear that their end is wrong,

narrow and selfish and 'so must be condemned. But it would be false and superficial to say that everything in the band of robbers including their strength and unity of purpose and concerted action are all wrong. There is a genuine germ of truth in the popular saying that there is honour among thieves, and honour whether among thieves or others is in itself a good. The strength of a band of robbers arises from what is good in them, their mutual trust, and sense of obligation towards one another and recognition of the common good of the band as the true good of each. So the might of such a band of robbers is really the might of the right in them and hence not open to criticism or objection. The wrongness of the end they seek is not the secret of their strength but the weakness of their cause. Similarly to take a brilliant historical example the might of a Napoleon is really the might of the right of the ideals of the French Revolution. Then on the theatre of European history appears one who seeks to utilise this accumulated momentum for a narrow end of personal ambition. The common sense of mankind will always admire the might and genius of a Napoleon, while it will condemn with equal emphasis the wrongness of his end. Hence we conclude that a clear distinction must be made between what we are condemning and what we have no right to condemn.

Such a clear discrimination of issues is precisely what is lacking in the political propaganda of Mr. Gandhi, which is a wholesale condemnation of everything in the present order of the State. Not only is such discrimination lacking in him, but he is actually responsible for a very misleading opposite impression and confusion of issues by his constantly harping on his favourite antithesis between physical might and moral right, between what he calls brute-force and soul-force. At no time in the eventful history of our country was there greater need for our people to appreciate the true value of constituted authority and organised force in the life of the community than at this critical time when we are actually on the verge of what may prove to be the biggest experiment in popular Government that the world has ever seen. This is precisely where Mr. Gandhi has signally failed and done a lasting disservice to our people. (He has thoughtlessly advocated a system of non-cooperation which seeks to paralyse the entire machinery of the State.) We plead that in any intelligent agitation which aims at constructive results there must be a clear discrimination between what is inherently right and good in the State and as such must command our approval and allegiance and what is clearly wrong and evil and as such must be condemned and fought against. Not to do so would be like cutting our nose to

spite our face. Mr. Gandhi's proposal is a gospel of despair and involves the indiscriminate throwing overboard of all things good, bad and indifferent alike in the existing machinery of Government. The might of that machinery is not only a good but is in a real sense our good, for it is not simply the creation of a band of alien rulers, but is the solid achievement of the cooperation of ourselves and our fathers before us. We ask pointedly why should we throw overboard this good which is our good. To do so would be not only an expensive and wasteful policy that plays havoc with our own national achievement in the past but suicidal folly. The further elaboration of this point would take us right into the heart of the next section of our polemic against Non-cooperation.

III

THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-COOPERATION.

So far we have examined at close quarters the common element of non-violence that underlies all Mr. Gandhi's political efforts. Now let us focus attention on what is peculiar and new in his present movement of non-co-operation. We have already seen in our examination of the doctrine of non-violence in the preceding section, that his coupling it with non-cooperation imported into it an alien element which destroyed its original ethical character. It remains for us now in the present section to elaborate still further and examine more intimately the implications of non-cooperation. In order to do this adequately, we must analyse what is involved in the existence of the State.

The being of the State involves a general will to maintain the State on the part of the community. By this we do not mean that there was a definite social contract artificially made or consciously and deliberately entered into at a particular historical epoch. The State is a natural growth and not an artificial manufacture. But on the other hand the State is not simply identical with the community. It is only an organised unit, perhaps the biggest and most comprehensive of all organised

units, the ground and guarantee of all other organised units in the life of the community. It rests on the implicit consent or tacit will or unconscious recognition on the part of the community that organised political life is a good. This we call the general will to maintain the State. But quite distinct from this is the particular will of the State itself as it finds expression in definite laws and regulations and enactments of policies. In the past Mr. Gandhi had only challenged particular laws and regulations of the state, but now he has gone a step further and is challenging not only the will of the State, but the more ultimate will of the community itself to maintain the State. This is what is distinctive of his latest non-cooperation movement, and we contend that this involves a fatal confusion of thought on his part between two perfectly distinct and very different elements involved in the existence of the State, namely, the general will of the community to maintain the State and the particular will of the State itself. The two are by no means identical. He is seeking to undermine the general will of the community to maintain the State on his own admission because of his utter disapproval of the will of the State in two instances in particular, namely, the Khilafat and the Punjab. Is there not a fatal blunder of thought and confusion of issues here? Or is he legitimately entitled to pass from the one to the other?

There is a certain ambiguity on Mr. Gandhi's part and uncertainty as to his exact intentions which deserves to be thoroughly exposed in this connection. One is utterly perplexed by his utterances, to know what exactly he is out for. Is he altogether and in toto opposed to all organised political life? There are unmistakable traces that warrant such a view in his utterances. In a booklet called 'Indian Home Rule,' originally published some years ago in Gujarati, a free translation of which has recently been published with his approval, he has stated in the form of a dialogue with an imaginary enquirer his views on diverse matters. Here he has expressed himself emphatically as radically opposed to all that is distinctively characteristic of modern civilisation and political ideals. Several critics have brought to light the hopelessly reactionary character of Mr. Gandhi's ideals as laid down dogmatically by him in this booklet, and held it up to ridicule. The astonishing thing about this booklet is its audacious and sweeping condemnation in general unqualified terms of several modern institutions and honourable professions and useful industries, with no serious constructive alternative scheme elaborated to take their place.

Besides this, we may mention a striking little speech that he made in proposing the toast of the British Empire at the annual gathering of the

Madras Law dinner in April 1915, in the course of which he said that the best government according to him was the one that governed least, and that as this was more true of the British Government than of any other, he proposed the health of the British Empire. The reason assigned here by him is significant. Also in the course of his famous speech at the inauguration of the Benares Hindu University in April 1916, he said definitely that he was an anarchist though not of the type that resort to assassination and violence. Further there is a significant passage in his Presidential address at the First Gujarat Political Conference held in November 1917, in which after speaking enthusiastically of Indian political awakening and aspiration towards Swaraj and parliamentary institutions, he suddenly said "In offering these views I have assumed the propriety of the current trend of thought. To me, however, it does not appear to be tending altogether in the right direction. Our agitation is based on the Western model. The Swaraj we desire is of a Western type. As a result of it, India will have to enter into competition with Western nations. Many believe that there is no escape from it. I do not think so. I cannot forget that India is not Europe, India is not Japan, India is not China. The divine word that 'India alone is the land of Karma (Action), the rest is the land of Bhoga (Enjoyment), is indelibly imprinted on my

mind. I feel that India's mission is different from that of the others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the process of purification that this country has voluntarily undergone. India is less in need of steel weapons, it has fought with divine weapons ; it can still do so. Other nations have been votaries of brute-force. . . . India can win all by soul-force. . . . If we have faith enough, we can wield that force over the whole world. Religion having lost its hold on us, we are without an anchor to keep us firm amidst the storm of modern civilisation, and are therefore being tossed to and fro. Enough, however, of this, for the present. . . . In spite of my views being as I have just described them, I do not hesitate to take part in the Swaraj movement, for India is being governed in accordance with the Western system and even the Government admit that the British Parliament presents the best type of that system. Without parliamentary government, we should be nowhere."

And yet speaking of the British Parliament in the aforementioned booklet on 'Indian Home Rule' he says "That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliaments is like a sterile woman and a prostitute. Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case. That Parliament has not yet of its own accord done a single good thing, hence

I have compared it to a sterile woman. . . .
It is like a prostitute because it is under the control
of ministers who change from time to time. . .

. . . The Parliament is a costly toy of the
nation. . . . The Parliament is without a
real master. Under the Prime Minister, its move-
ment is not steady, but it is buffeted about like a
prostitute." This is Mr. Gandhi's irresponsible and
light-hearted verdict on the greatest representative
institution in the world, the achievement of
centuries of the political struggle of a great and
free people. We know not what alternative scheme
of organised political life Mr. Gandhi has in view.
At any rate he has not yet chosen to elaborate
it for our edification. Perhaps he has none to put in
its place. Perhaps he does not want any. In the
course of the same chapter he says "If the money
and the time wasted by the Parliament were
entrusted to a few good men, the English nation
would be occupying to-day a much higher platform."
So the only clue to any alternate scheme of political
life that Mr. Gandhi has to offer is to entrust
the money and the time to a "few good men."
One wonders if he is oblivious of such practical
questions as to how the money is to be collected, how
the time is to be conserved, and how the few good
men are to be selected, and what the test of fitness
to rule is to be. No illuminating suggestions are
forthcoming. If instead of such hasty generalisation

and irresponsible criticism, he had faced the sober task of practical politics, his common sense would have shown him that Parliamentary Institutions and the entire administrative machinery of the State are not wasteful luxuries or ruinous extravagances that the British people are meaninglessly indulging in, but are the definite embodiments of what is in reality a broad human good, meeting a universal human need of all civilised communities and that it is impossible to effectively organise communal life in India without having recourse to such parliamentary institutions and administrative machinery as have stood the test of centuries and proved themselves so efficacious in the actual experience of other nations. As against all this, what has Mr. Gandhi to oppose, except his private feeling. In the same book he says speaking of British political institutions "If India copies England, it is my firm conviction that she will be ruined." Yet in spite of his "firm conviction" that India will be ruined he said in the course of the above mentioned address at the First Gujarat Political Conference "In spite of my views being as I have just described them, I do not hesitate to take part in the Swaraj movement, for India is being governed in accordance with the Western system." So just because India is governed in accordance with the Western system, he does not hesitate to take part in a movement, which it is his "firm conviction"

will spell ruin to India. What are we to make of this ?

All these inconsistent statements and contradictory admissions betray the awkward fact that he has launched out to lead the Indian peoples to their political destiny, without having quite definitely made up his mind one way or the other as to what exactly he wants or considers desirable or best. The last passages quoted clearly prove that he is wavering between two incompatible ideals or courses of action, one of which seems to him ideally right, while at the same time the other seems practically necessary and he has not yet shown that he has overcome this opposition or found a satisfactory way out of this difficulty. He owes it to the Indian peoples to explain himself clearly and to set forth where exactly he stands with reference to these conflicting issues and their relation to the present non-cooperation movement. What exactly is he aiming at or trying to lead the Indian people to ? Or is there no definite aim or goal at all yet in view ?

We suspect that at heart he is an anarchical individualist with a powerful vein of religious fanaticism of a particular old world type, who is seeking to use the exigencies of the present political situation in India for experimenting on a gigantic scale on his own more ulterior ends which he regards as the true ideals of human existence.

Therefore we cannot resist the uncomfortable feeling that in Mr. Gandhi we have an enigmatic personality of unstable tendencies to whom politics is only an accident and a means, and that behind the political Ghandi, there is a religious enthusiast who is at war with modern civilisation, who can see no good even in the best modern political institutions, who preaches widespread celibacy and a return to a state of nature and condemns wholesale modern machinery, industrial life, lawyers and doctors all in one, and who is aspiring to stand forth as the latest modern apostle of the simple-life, preaching to a luxurious, pleasure-loving sophisticated generation. But we have no desire to be unfair to him. We only desire to point out that he has given ample room for such an interpretation.

We wish we had a clear unambiguous pronouncement from him as to his real intentions and purposes, as to what exactly is the relation between his political propaganda and his more ulterior religious dreams. He owes it to the country and the people whose support he is seeking and obtaining by such questionable means involving a confusion of issues, to honestly speak out his real mind, and tell us plainly if he is seriously pursuing the political progress of India and whole heartedly working for its true good, or if it is for him merely a convenient instrument for some other end even though that ulterior aim be invested with all the awe and

majesty of religion. If he should do so, as it is plainly his duty, then we would know where he is and what he stands for and what India may expect of him. Then our people would be in a position to consider the situation intelligently and to make the momentous choice between steady progress in organised political life to a clearly defined goal and reactionary anarchism. Meanwhile we call the attention of our people to the undeniable fact that he has not yet chosen to make his real intentions on these ultimate issues clear as it is his duty to do. Perhaps he has not yet made up his mind on the subject. If so, he has no right whatever to plunge prematurely into an ill-considered political propaganda involving far-reaching consequences and the life and fortunes of a whole people. Is he insensible to the tremendous issues at stake? But if he has already made up his mind on these momentous issues and clearly decided on his choice and is no longer standing hesitating at the parting of ways, why does he not speak out his real mind plainly and unambiguously on these questions which he has so long left open and uncertain?

In any case, it would be only fair to give him meanwhile the benefit of the doubt, and to hold that he is not, altogether against, all organised political life, but only against this particular State established in India, namely the British Indian Government. There is much in his more

recent utterances to warrant the view that he is himself now at last contemplating a definite alternative scheme of political organisation. If not, it is difficult to understand what exactly is meant by his saying that Non-cooperation would help the Indian peoples to achieve Swarajya within a year. If this be the real object of his present movement, then he can no longer pretend that the Punjab affair and the Khilafat question are the real grounds for Non-cooperation ; they would only be the immediate occasions for the movement, which would really be aiming at establishing Swarajya. Let us proceed to examine this.

Here we are once more confronted with a further ambiguity as to what exactly Mr. Gandhi means by Swarajya. At times at least he seems to contemplate the possibility of a complete severance of the British connection and absolute autonomy for India, based on Hindu-Moslem unity outside the Empire. This is the clear implication of the emphatic passage, already quoted, in his speech on the Non-cooperation Resolution at the Calcutta Special Congress, in which he said that if he had to choose between the British connection and the Khilafat, he would choose the Khilafat, and that if he had to choose between the British connection and the honour of the Punjab he would choose the honour of the Punjab. We have already in the First Section pointed out that we are utterly at a loss to see

how the severance of the British connection would either directly solve the Khilafat difficulty or ensure the honour of the Punjab against possible outrages. On the contrary, we anticipate from the severance of the British connection far graver religious wrongs than what is alleged to have been done to the Khilafat and far worse outrages than occurred in 1919 not only in the Punjab but in the whole of India.

But inconsistently enough, there are other passages in his speeches which clearly imply that he is still contemplating the possibility and even desirability of retaining in some thin attenuated form the British connection for some time, say for one year at least, to give him time and opportunity to make up his mind as to ways and means and to get his house in order. We urge that Mr. Gandhi has no right whatever to leave the public mind mystified and unenlightened as to his real intentions in this matter. He owes a plain duty to explain himself unambiguously and to put forward a clear programme before the people of this country before he can in any legitimate way lay claim to have won their intelligent allegiance. Meanwhile, we cannot but pronounce his majority vote at the Calcutta Special congress to be only a dubious victory of doubtful value, which left many far-reaching implications undetermined, and important issues uncertain. In short if he contemplates complete severance of the British connection, he ought

to say so straight, and in that case explain how he proposes to tackle the difficult problems of internal peace and security of person and property in the land, and of external defence against foreign aggression. Then there will be a real chance of a definite decision on a clear issue by the people of this country. On the other hand, if he still contemplates in the new age of his Swarajya, the retention of some form of British connection that would still secure for India the protection of the Empire, for however short a period, it is but fair for us to demand that he should make it clear how such a retention of the British connection is compatible with his doctrine of Non-cooperation. This is the very least that he ought to do, before he can lay claim to any victory or intelligent decision on the part of the country on his behalf.

But as it is, there is a hopeless indefiniteness in his whole political message at this critical time, when men's minds are perplexed by conflicting issues of which he takes full advantage. Large numbers of people who swear by his name and profess to be ardent adherents of his new gospel of non-violent Non-cooperation are in reality actuated by little more than a one-sided appeal of some aspect or other of his complex personality and many-sided message, without much regard to the rest. With some, it is the simplicity and purity and self-sacrificing zeal and transparent religious earnestness of

the man himself who stands in such vivid and arresting contrast to too many of his compatriots in the Indian political arena, that makes the appeal. Part of this appeal, at least, rests in the last resort on the traditional prejudices of the vast masses of the Indian peoples. This is to some extent the explanation of his extraordinary hold on and the secret of his power over considerable numbers specially among the unlettered masses. With others, it is simply political opportunism. He has furnished them with an ingenious way of defying and challenging the authority of the State without coming under the clutches of the law. That is all that non-violent Non-cooperation means to some of his followers at any rate. Further, at a critical moment in the history of British Indian Moslem sentiment he has come forward dramatically at the psychological hour of its necessity and helplessness with a convenient way of showing their resentment. Finally, there are some at least among his Hindu followers to whom his movement makes a powerful appeal for diplomatic reasons as affording a good chance of making common cause and joining forces with Mussalmans in the hope that it may pave the way to the golden dream of (Hindu-Moslem unity). This analysis of the nature and composition of the many motives that move different sections of Mr. Gandhi's following is significant in the present context as exposing the essential weakness that under-

lies the apparently solid phalanx and formidable front that he may seem at first sight to present.

He is constantly harping on his achievement of Hindu-Moslim unity. It is incredible that one so acute and so experienced in men and affairs should seem to be so incurably blind to the hollowness and actual lack of content of this claim to unity. Let us ask definitely in what does the unity consist? What are its grounds or contents? So far as his present movement is concerned, it hardly amounts to anything more than saying that the Moslems have a grievance because of the failure of the British Government to secure more favourable terms for Turkey in an international tribunal, and the Hindus because of the inadequate character of the verdict of the Government on the Punjab affair; and so the two great sections of the Indian peoples, each with its distinctive grievance, are both being urged to unite in common opposition to the established Government in power to-day in British India, which Government is held responsible for the aforementioned two quite distinct wrongs.) So that the real bond of union at the present moment or at any rate the most effective element in it, is actually seen in the last analysis to be furnished by this despised "foreign and satanic" Government, which he is seeking to undermine and to paralyse. If opposition to this Government does not actually constitute Hindu-Moslem unity, it certainly is the most pro-

minent and effective element in it at the present moment to which Mr. Gandhi himself is perpetually appealing. So in all sincerity and truth one wonders what would happen to this boasted achievement of Hindu-Moslem unity, if the present Government should withdraw from the scene and this opposition to a supposed common enemy should cease. We cannot help fearing that then this boasted superstructure would collapse like a castle of cards, and the last state would be far worse than the first, for woe unto them that seek to build ambitiously without making sure of or laying deep and secure the foundations on which they build. (Even Mr. Gandhi must admit that this Hindu-Moslem unity will be considerably poorer in content and less real in character, if there was no more ground for this opposition, which admittedly has strengthened that unity.)

But Mr. Gandhi may deny that negative opposition to the present Government is the essence of the bond between Hindu and Moslem, though it may have helped considerably to strengthen it. Let us then seek to examine the contents of this more ultimate bond of union. The Tenth Chapter of the aforementioned treatise of Mr. Gandhi on 'Indian Home Rule' contains a discourse on his view of the Hindu-Moslem problem. Therein he says, "The phrase has been invented by our mutual enemy." This we suppose means that the Hindu-Moslem pro-

blem has been manufactured by the British Indian Government for its own purposes. Yet in the very next sentence he makes the inconsistent admission that "when the Hindus and Mahomedans fought against one another, they certainly spoke in that strain." If they "certainly spoke in that strain" when they fought with each other, long before the British advent, then it is evident that it could not be said to be a British invention. But Mr. Gandhi goes on to say that "They have long since ceased to fight. How, then, can there be any inborn enmity?" In the first place we ask, is Mr. Gandhi not aware of the various riots and serious disturbances of the public peace attended with violence on both sides in Hindu-Moslim quarrels that are by no means unfamiliar even in our day. In the second place, even if it be conceded for the sake of argument that they have now ceased to fight, the memories of former feuds and wrongs done, as well as mutually incompatible beliefs and practices characteristic of the two communities, might still furnish ample basis for mutual misunderstanding. Towards the end of the same chapter Mr. Gandhi himself admits "There is mutual distrust between the two communities" and instances as proof of it, "The Mahomedans, therefore, ask for certain concessions from Lord Morley. Why should the Hindus oppose this? If the Hindu desisted, the English would notice it, the Mahomedans would

gradually begin to trust the Hindu, and brotherliness would be the outcome." He does not seem to realise the incompatibility between this and his earlier statement. There he seemed to talk of Hindu-Moslem unity as an accomplished fact, while here he seems to concede that it is an ideal yet to be accomplished. Of course, it is open to him to say that it is an ideal, which in part has already been realised, though in part it has yet to be realised. If so, he ought to clearly examine and precisely determine how much has been definitely realised and how much is yet waiting to be realised. This he has nowhere done yet and the consequence is a hopeless confusion of issues in which no one knows where he stands.

The truth is, and we have no manner of doubt about it, that Hindu-Moslem unity is a dear dream of Mr. Gandhi's heart, as it may be of many others who by no means are of his way of thinking or deduce his conclusions from it. In his eager love for what ought to be or what he would wish to be, Mr. Gandhi has hastily, by a sudden flight of imagination persuaded himself that it is already an accomplished fact. He simply comforts himself with saying "It takes two to quarrel. If I do not want to quarrel with a Mahomedan, the latter will be powerless to foist a quarrel on me." (Indian Home Rule, page 54). Is Mr. Gandhi unaware of the fact that there is no guarantee of the

multitudes of people on both sides sharing this pious intention on his part not to quarrel? So his individual determination, however excellent in itself, can in no sense pretend to be a fruitful solution of a historic and thorny problem. This is only another instance of that convenient confusion of thought and unreal simplification of issues of which Mr. Gandhi is guilty.

We urge, in all humility, that the problem of Indian National unity is a far more complicated and difficult one than he seems to realise. The unity of the Indian political consciousness still grievously lacks positive richness of achieved content, and so must be frankly regarded as an ideal to work towards, rather than simply as an accomplished fact. There is no country in the world with so vastly heterogeneous a population with widely varying ancestries, traditions, beliefs, practices and conflicting interests as the India of to-day. There is no use in merely blinking this fact and fondly holding that the way is smooth and clear, and that what is yet to be, already is in the dream-land of our imagination. We contend that a more sober minded and responsible study of Indian political conditions would convince one of the grave dangers and serious difficulties that still lie ahead of us, and of the hard toils, many sacrifices and mutual give and take that our peoples must yet learn, before they can be said to have achieved

in any fair measure that positive solidarity of heart and purpose which alone can truly constitute the rich bond of national unity. One wonders in blank astonishment if Mr. Gandhi is incurably blind to all this, when he seeks to palm off negative opposition to a supposed common enemy as in any sense a substitute for the positive richness of content that national unity must have if it is to be real and effective at all. What he offers is nothing more than the barest apology for the reality. The utmost that we can concede to him is that such a common sense of grievances on the part of peoples living for long centuries side by side, within the same territorial boundaries and now owning allegiance to the same sovereign power, may be one step, perhaps a first step, perhaps only a preparation for a first step, towards national unity. On his own premises he is not really entitled to conclude any more than this. So when he talks glibly of his present movement of Non-cooperation achieving Swarajya for India in one year, he stands convicted out of his own mouth ; and betrays a lamentable ignorance of the complexity of the task and of the immensity of the issues before us.

Further, even if we overlook all these difficulties and concede that the end were so easily achievable as Mr. Gandhi seems to imagine what would be the result ? Is it a desirable aim worthy of the ambition of our people ? The best that could

be achieved along his lines would be a Hindu-Moslem unity substantially constituting a united India, standing alone and defenceless in the midst of the modern world. This is all that this great prophet and idealist of Indian Nationalism has to offer to his country.

Let us contrast this with what the actual status of India at the present moment in the British Imperial Commonwealth involves. We contend that in spite of all the ugly facts and humiliating imperfections which stare one in the face and which we require no prophet to point out to us, the British connection does certainly involve the possibility of a higher destiny than the comparatively simpler ideal of a United India. It involves the possibility of the co-partnership of India as an honourable member of a great brotherhood of many nations, not simply in alliance with one another linked together by merely sentimental ties or for economic interests only, but in stable organised governmental relationship, banded together for righteousness in the world. Those with little minds and narrow vision are unable to see beyond the actual words or deeds of the rulers of the day and the ugly facts that mar the harmony of relation between India and the other self-governing dominions. To such, the British Imperial Commonwealth must seem in its present unorganised and anomalous condition, a huge amorphous growth or a vast

Leviathon absorbing everything. But those who view the present not in its meaningless isolation, but in its historical perspective with the true eye of prophetic insight, will penetrate beyond the outward veil of the immediate present with all its grievous wrongs, and discern the secret silent undercurrents and the hidden higher possibilities of things. Such minds alone are the true prophets of our nation, and they cannot but realise, that in spite of all the obvious imperfections, how profoundly different this empire is from any of its many fore-runners in history, and trace through the tangled web of its chequered past, the secret pledge and hidden possibility of its higher destiny as it still lies buried in the womb of the future, when it might some day, and that not in the far distance, definitely and consciously organise itself as the greatest force for international good will and peace the world has ever known, as a great family of free nations, as one vast commonwealth of many commonwealths. (That golden day of our dreams will not dawn unless and until all parties, ourselves as well as others, cease to think and feel selfishly and parochially in narrow national terms and begin to think and feel imperially or in international terms. Mr. Gandhi is certainly not helping India forward towards such a universal goal or broadly human good, but is definitely seeking to focus our desire on a lower and poorer aim.

So far we have dwelt on the possible benefits that may flow from co-partnership in the Imperial Commonwealth. Now let us turn to other benefits to India herself. Apart from what all but Mr. Gandhi may regard as the obvious material benefits of increased facilities for locomotion and intercommunication between all parts of India, the tapping of natural resources by the aid of modern scientific discoveries and invention for the sustenance, comfort and convenience of our people, and the enormous advantages to Indian defence as against foreign aggression, and the internal security to person and property, of law and order, there is the further consideration of the invaluable fact of the British connection not only actually awakening the long dormant desire for a unitary political consciousness, but also of bringing into India the priceless contribution of the best of the thought, art and freedom of the civilisation of Europe, in a uniquely real way, otherwise impossible, guaranteed, in the actual bond of a common political organisation and allegiance. Can the possible value of such a contribution as the British connection can make to the scope and quality of Indian destiny, be light-heartedly and hastily dismissed as Mr. Gandhi seeks to do? Let us remember that the European civilisation is something much bigger than the actual achievement or the private property of the British people. It cannot

simply be identified with the course of their national history. It represents something broadly human in its significance and value, which is an international achievement or universal good. It is the amalgam of at least four of the world's greatest civilisations, namely Hebrew Religion, Greek Art and Wisdom, Roman Law, and free Anglo-Saxon political institutions. The British connection means for India the sure and certain guarantee of the assimilation of all this grand human heritage into the fullness of the organic growth of Indian national life, unlike a country like Japan which can only take in what it can out of Europe by a mere process of outward imitation or external alliance. How immeasurably poorer a thing would the destiny of our people be without all this priceless heritage that the British connection may undeniably secure for us ?

Of course, it would be a far less complicated and very much easier thing to leave the additional complication of the British connection out of account and work only for Hindu-Moslem unity as Mr. Gandhi is now seeking to do ; and a still simpler and easier thing to concentrate on Hindu unity alone and to leave the Mussulman out of it altogether. Mr. Gandhi himself sees the folly and impossibility of following such a course, and rightly strives after Hindu-Moslem unity as a higher good, though it be more difficult of achievement than

merely Hindu unity. May we not then on the same grounds urge against Mr. Gandhi that the British Indian Government established in India foreshadows the still more difficult but also more comprehensive and higher ideal of Hindu-Moslem-European unity, than merely the lower and poorer ideal of Hindu-Moslem unity for which he is now working? If so, may we not contend against him that we who prize and cherish the British connection in spite of all its added cost and difficulties and humiliations need not be time-servers and backboneless sycophants bowing to the *status quo*, but may also be prophets and idealists, in our several measure, moved by the splendour and radiant glory of a vision of the destiny of our people grander even by far than anything that moves his soul? After all, Mr. Gandhi cannot lay claim to have an exclusive monopoly of prophetic insight or moral idealism or patriotic love. Others beside him, even among those who believe in cooperating with or who form part of the huge monotonous humdrum machinery of Government, despised by Mr. Gandhi, may have a quickened spirit, sincerity of purpose, purity of aim and a passionate love for the motherland, and may dream prophetic dreams and be inspired with perhaps even a loftier idealism.

But, here, we must frankly recognise that to such a contention Mr. Gandhi may reply that

however true these considerations may be in themselves, he has completely lost faith in the good intentions and reliability of the British Indian Government. Indeed it is only fair to him, for us to remember in this connection that as recently as in December 1919 at the Amritsar Congress, he pleaded powerfully for co-operation with the Government. How could he have done so, if he had not been really alive to the benefits of the British connection with India? And yet within a few months after the Amritsar Congress had decided at Mr. Gandhi's instance on cooperation with the Government we find the self-same Mr. Gandhi turning completely round on his former attitude, and advocating a radical form of Non-cooperation with the Government aiming at paralysing the entire machinery of the State, even perhaps to the point of definitely breaking with the British connection.) What is the explanation of this sudden and dramatic change on his part? Why has this high-souled man who has in the past so powerfully and consistently believed in advocated and worked for the British Imperial connection with India, now so utterly lost heart and faith in it?

Let us quote in this context a striking relevant passage from an open letter that Mr. Gandhi recently addressed to every Englishman in India. In the course of that letter, he says "In my humble opinion no Indian has cooperated with the British

Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty nine years of public life in the face of circumstances that might well have turned any other man into a rebel. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that my co-operation was not based on the fear of the punishments provided by your laws, or any other selfish motive. It was free and voluntary cooperation based on the belief that the sum-total of the activity of the British Government was for the benefit of India. I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the empire—at the time of the Boer war when I was in charge of the Ambulance Corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's despatches, at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps, at the time of the commencement of the late war when I raised an Ambulance Corps and as a result of the strenuous training and a severe attack of pleurisy, and lastly, in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira district involving long and trying marches, that I had an attack of dysentery which proved almost fatal. I did all this in the full belief that acts such as mine must gain for my country an equal status in the Empire. So late as last December I pleaded hard for a trustful co-operation I fully believed that Mr. Lloyd George would redeem his promise to the Musalmans and that the revela-

tions of the official atrocities in the Punjab would secure full reparation for the Punjabis. But the treachery of Mr. Lloyd George and its appreciation by you, and the condonation of the Punjab atrocities have completely shattered my faith in the good intentions of the Government and the nation which is supporting it." This is a striking and pathetic statement by Mr. Gandhi himself which puts in a nutshell his reasons for his complete change of attitude towards the Government.

Let us proceed to examine the alleged grounds and estimate their validity. In the course of the same letter he enumerates a list of further causes of discontent, besides the above mentioned, against the Imperial Government, such as ever increasing military expenditure, extravagant working of every department in disregard of Indian poverty, disarmament of the Indian peoples, progressive repressive legislation and the degrading treatment of Indians in British Dominions. But as none of these, nor all of these induced Mr. Gandhi to lose faith in the value of the British connection, and as inspite of them he urged and practised effective cooperation with the Government, they may be left out of consideration for the purposes of the argument of this paper.

So then the real grounds for his loss of faith in the goodwill and righteous intentions of the Govern-

ment are two in number as he himself definitely states, namely the decision on the Khilafat question and the verdict on the Punjab affair. The Khilafat decision is an international affair, in which Great Britain certainly had a most important say, but was by no means the sole or even supreme deciding authority. The Punjab affair is a ghastly tragedy in recent day Indian history. Both these are highly controversial contemporary events, in which more than one view of the rights and wrongs of the issues involved is possible. Mr. Gandhi is speaking and acting, with regard to these two incidents, as if his view of them were the only right one and as if no legitimate difference of opinion were possible. This in itself is an enormous and extravagant assumption which may be seriously questioned. But for the purposes of our present argument, we need not go into it. Even if we concede to Mr. Gandhi his very big claim that his view of the Punjab affair and the Khilafat question were the only right view, we contend that it would in no way warrant the stupendous conclusion that he seeks to draw from it.

His conclusion is a verdict of a complete loss of faith in the British Indian Government. The premises from which this universal conclusion is drawn are just two particular events in contemporary history. The utmost that he can deduce from these two events is to cast discredit on the insight

and integrity of this generation of British Indian statesmen. But that is not what he has done. He has not confined himself merely to a condemnation of particular acts of the State, which would have been perfectly legitimately open to him to do, but he has jumped to the hasty and unwarranted conclusion that therefore the State itself has forfeited all claim to our confidence and loyalty. By no trick of logic can he extract this universal conclusion from his two particular premises. His whole passage of thought in this matter involves a confusion of issues resulting from a fatal failure to distinguish between the particular will of the State which may have erred and erred grievously in this or that respect, and what is very different from it, namely the general will of the community to maintain the State.

He has simply allowed himself to be obsessed by two single contemporary events, which however important in themselves, must certainly not be treated as if they were the only things that exist or matter. They must be considered in their historical setting to be rightly appraised. We are far too near the events, and far too intimately wrapped up in them to be able to form a just and impartial view of the intrinsic merits of the issues involved. Mr. Gandhi's verdict must therefore be pronounced to be of doubtful value and to be based on an exaggerated unbalanced judgment

without a correct perspective of the events. We submit in all humility that a fairer, saner and more sober judgment of the intrinsic worth of the British Indian Government, should be based, not simply on two contemporary events, however important they may be, but on an impartial survey of the historic trend of British Indian relations.

Such a truly philosophical study of history will reveal to us an Over-Soul or Providence, or hidden higher Purpose, call it what we may, working in history in and through and inspite of particular individuals, who seem to be the sole actors in the theatre of public events, which they seem to shape according to their will. But no one statesman or even particular group or generation of statesmen, whatever power they may seem to wield, have in reality in their hands the final issues of events or the ultimate destiny of any people. They are but unconscious instruments in the hands of an invisible Providence, which works through history to its own far-reaching ends.

In vivid illustration of this, we need only to call attention here to the first advent of Europeans to the coasts of India. They came consciously moved merely by a commercial desire for gain in the fabled markets of India, the land of the Pagoda tree, and with no set governmental or civilising aim. But before they knew where they were, they got involved in all sorts of local issues, and were

led step by step inevitably to build up a vast stable system of Government, which has united all parts of this great land in the unity of a single political allegiance ensuring safety from foreign aggression and security of person and property and all the conditions of civilised life and orderly progress. Nay more ; in spite of all its defect and imperfections it has substantially helped in awakening in our peoples a national political consciousness, with a divine discontent and a hunger and thirst after a fuller and freer life. Now at last in the fullness of time, it has enacted into law a definite constitution, guaranteeing to our people responsible self-government ; and we are witnessing the actual historic inauguration of a New Era in this land.

We are not contending that all this has come as quickly as some of us might have hoped for or desired. To such it must seem belated. But the important thing is, there it is, undeniably the record of steady progress and solid achievement. Nor are we claiming that all this has been carried out of set purpose and deliberate intention by wise and noble rulers and farsighted statesmen consistently acting according to one concerted and premeditated plan from the start. It never is so in history. Practical politics is only concerned with the present or perhaps the immediate future. If we look only at the superficial side of history, at

the outward aspect of actual events, we see but the imperfect human side of the selfishness, error, expediency, diplomacy and state-craft of particular individuals and groups who act according to their varying motives in the varying exigencies in which they find themselves. This is all that the mere actualist sees in the study of History. But there is another side to History, in the grand continuity of achievement from generation to generation, and in the golden thread of steady progress traceable through the tangled web of outward events.

Considered from this higher point of view, the history of British Indian relations in spite of all the grievous faults and failures and many imperfections that may mar its outward aspect, and in spite of what may seem to some to be its slowness of pace, must be pronounced, by all impartial students, to be on the whole a steady and onward march to some great and unparalleled destiny that awaits our people, foreordained by Providence. There is no country in the world which presents the amazing variety of peoples and conflict of interests that the India of today does. Superficially regarded from the standpoint of the short sighted actualist, there is none so pitiable as we, for are we not even as a house divided against itself? In the deep and elemental cleavages of Indian life, seems to lie our fundamental weakness. But prophetically regarded, from the true and higher standpoint of

the philosophical idealist, such amazing variety and conflict of interests are not the weakness of our cause, but the secret of our strength ; for, are they not the raw material of our destiny and do they not constitute a challenge to the best in us to attempt a synthesis, richer far in content and more variedly beautiful than is possible for any other country or people anywhere else in the world, who may seem from the superficial standpoint of the historical actualist to be more favourably situated and better off than we in India ?

This is the true secret of Indian history and the inner meaning of the age-long tragedy that it outwardly seems to be. It is the continued discipline of Providence, and the prolonged sacrifice of the mother of our people, in travail for the birth into being of a fairer civilisation than the world has yet seen, including and transcending all that is of enduring worth in Aryan and Non-Aryan, in Hindu and Mussalman, in Indian and European. This is the prize of the high calling of our destiny, and whatever is not of this or contrary to this, however seductive at the moment, is not of God and let us beware of it. This is what Mr. Gandhi has lost sight of and would have us forfeit, simply because of two contemporary events which have loomed so large before his eyes as to hide everything else and to upset his mental balance and to destroy his historical perspective and sanity of judgment.

Thus regarded, he will be seen to be no far-sighted seer or true prophet of our time or genuine spiritual leader of our people with a clear vision of the straight path to our high destiny, as he has been claimed to be, but only a short-sighted actualist blinded by the outward aspect of two events in contemporary history that star him in the face, and oblivious to every thing else. And when the blind lead the blind, great shall be the fall thereof !

IV.

CONCLUSION.

Now we must seek to gather to a close the various threads of our argument. We began with reviewing the history of the present Non-cooperation Movement in India and found that it was an ill-considered revolutionary step, involving far-reaching consequences, and that it has been hastily proposed to and accepted by considerable numbers of people. Then we examined the mandatory claim that has been made for the Congress decision on Non-cooperation. We fear that this claim being repeatedly made by interested partisans, without being effectively contradicted, might mislead several people to swallow it uncritically by attaching to it a wholly imaginary and fictitious value as the considered verdict of the national assembly, morally binding on the consciences of all loyal sons of the motherland. The most effective arguments against the mandatory claim, we found to consist in a clear analysis of the Congress majority vote and of the pliable Congress constitution that made it possible for that majority vote to be so easily obtained. We consider the criticism of some who have attacked the claims made for the Congress majority vote merely on the ground that that particular session of the

Congress was packed with Mr. Gandhi's followers, very inadequate. The further question remains as to how came it about that this particular session of the Congress was packed with a majority of the representatives of one particular party. Surely the only answer that could be given to this question is that the Congress constitution is of such a peculiarly unstable character as to permit of the possibility of such abuses. The real fault is not with the particular political party which took full advantage of this, but with the inherent weakness in the constitution of the Congress itself. Moderate leaders have refrained from carrying the argument against the mandatory claim to this level, because some of them, at any rate, are in the awkward plight of themselves having made similar, if not the same, exaggerated claims in the past for Congress decisions. But in this critical study of the Non-cooperation movement from an impartial academic standpoint, we are not handicapped by any party traditions, and so have felt free to expose radically the utterly baseless character of the mandatory claim.

Then we proceeded to analyse and examine critically the inner contents of Mr. Gandhi's present political message. We found that it consisted of two essential elements, namely, firstly the doctrine of Non-violence which is common to his present movement of Non-cooperation as well as its fore-runners in the South African Passive Resist-

ance Movement and the more recent Satyagraha movement; and secondly the distinctive and peculiar character of Non-cooperation as a new political weapon that he is seeking to use. As regards the former, namely the doctrine of Non-violence, we tried to trace the actual course of the development of Mr. Gandhi's thought on the subject. We found that his was a high-souled weapon inspired by noble motives, quite suited to the peculiar circumstances of the British Indian community in South Africa and successfully used by them. Then he sought to win moral sympathy and effect a real change of heart and spiritual results through self-suffering. We traced the gradual process by which he has hastily generalised from his limited South African experiences, and in disregard of wholesome advice to the contrary, came to regard Passive Resistance or Non-violence as a universal panacea for all political and other ills, applicable to the very different conditions of British India. We consider (Mr. Gandhi's South African triumphs as the key to the strength as well as the weakness of his position.)

Then passing to this present movement, we found that by coupling non-violence with Non-cooperation, he has really abandoned the exalted spiritual character and ethical aim that he has so far professed and resorted to actual coercion. He is now out not merely to effect a moral change

of heart through self-suffering. He is trying to do something more than that. He is definitely seeking to paralyse the machinery of the State by seeking to withdraw the consent of the governed and is therefore clearly resorting to coercion and not moral persuasion, even though the coercion be carried on by non-physical means. This lands him in the horns of a logical dilemma, namely either that he was erroneously generalising before when he was asserting the all sufficiency of self-sacrifice, or that he has now abandoned his exalted spiritual aim.

But in order to expose still further the confusion of thought and misunderstanding of issues on Mr. Gandhi's part, we found it necessary to carry analysis still further and to examine critically the sharp clear-cut antithesis between bodily might and moral right, between physical force and soul force, that runs right through his whole political teaching, and has brought to him and his cause a great deal of false sympathy to which he is not legitimately entitled. We have argued that this is a superficial opposition that will not bear examination. Rightly regarded, the opposition is not between bodily might and moral right, and bodily might itself is seen to be in the last resort a form of right, the embodiment of a good. Consequently, Mr Gandhi is mistaken in not recognising the sacred obligation to the solemn imperatives of the larger objective

conscience of the community that is incarnate in the institutions and mandates of the State, which he light-heartedly dismisses with the contemptuous epithet of 'brute force.'

Finally we came to grips with what is essential and peculiar in the principle of Non-cooperation itself and found that his present agitation is based on a confusion or rather failure to distinguish between two quite distinct elements, namely the general will of the community to maintain the State because organised political life is a good, and what is very different from it namely the particular will of the State itself. Because he disapproves of the latter, particularly in two respects, he has launched out to wage war against the former. We have also pointed out that in his present campaign he has left us in considerable uncertainty as to his exact intentions and ultimate aims. There is really a double uncertainty in this matter.

In the first place, there is considerable room for doubt as to whether he is really out for anarchy or whether he still stands for any form of organised political life. Even conceding to him the benefit of the doubt and admitting that he is really contemplating an alternative scheme of organised political life to replace the existing order of things, there is ample room for uncertainty as to how far and to what extent he desires to sever the British connection with India. It he does not

aim at wholly severing the British connection, or even contemplates its continuance for a convenient period of one year,) he must unambiguously explain how this is in any shape or form consistent with his total loss of faith in the integrity and goodwill of the British Indian Government. (If on the contrary, he is out for complete severance of the British connection, as he ought to be judging from his own statements, then it is his clear duty to say so frankly and to explain how then he proposes to face the difficult problems of internal order and external defence.) Then there would be a clear issue before the people of this country to decide on.

Further, if this be his aim, we point out that in the *status quo* with all its humiliating imperfections is implied the possibility of a loftier and more comprehensive ideal of the destiny of our people than in Mr. Gandhi's dream of Hindu-Moslem unity. By no trick of logic can he legitimately effect a deduction to a universal conclusion of a total severance of the British connection, merely on the basis of two particular premises namely the Punjab affair and the Khilafat question. (By seeking to do this he has shown that he is in reality no far-sighted idealist or true seer or spiritual prophet of our people, but only a short-sighted actualist, blinded by the proximate fact of two contemporary events, which have made him insensible to the spiritual undercurrent in our history making for a sublimer destiny.) If we listen

to his call at this critical hour of our national history, we shall indeed prove faithless to our exalted destiny and sell our birth-right for a mess of pottage. It looks as if an all-wise Providence had arranged for every other country in the world a particular national destiny, but had reserved for the chosen peoples of India, who have been gathered together in this land through the ages, a universal destiny, more variedly beautiful than that which is possible for any other people on earth. What a poor thing Indian National destiny would be if the seventy million Indian Mussulmans had neither part nor lot in it! Even so, what an immeasurably poorer thing would the destiny of our people be, if the glorious achievement of the civilisation of Europe made possible for India in the fact of the British connection were lost to her!

But in conclusion it may be asked, how then can we account for even the limited response and success that have so far crowned his efforts. The answer is not far to seek. In any age or country there are always considerable numbers of people who are short-sighted and can see only the immediate present, who are blinded by the outward aspect of events and are insensible to the more ultimate call of the inner meaning and the hidden higher purposes of things. To such people a short-sighted actualist appeal like his, which concentrates on one

or two striking popular events of the hour would make a powerful appeal.)

Apart from that, there are special causes operating at this time and in this land which have played into his hands. There is a widespread unrest all over the world at this time which has come as an after-math of the great war, and disruptive forces making for race-hatred, class-hatred, discord and decay, of which he is reaping the full benefit, though he may consciously disown them. These forces of evil may absorb and overwhelm him and the forces he is setting agoing but which he may any day be powerless to control. One need only recall as instances of these the labour troubles that are becoming acute in every land and Russian Bolshevism which is menacing the peace of Asia.

Apart from these disruptive forces that are working powerfully for hatred and disorder all over the world, there are certain conditions peculiar to India, which are favourable to such a propaganda as his. From time immemorial there have been acute and elemental cleavages in the bosom of Indian society that have made the dear motherland a house divided against itself. The successive waves of foreign invasion that have passed over the devoted head of India, have each in their several turn and measure but accentuated and multiplied these cleavages. What is the colossal phenomenon of Hindu caste or *Varnashramadharma*, with

its attendant problem of the untouchables, in its origin and development but a gigantic scheme of effectual social Non-cooperation, originally based on a colour line, which has persisted through all centuries of Indian History! The numerically small but powerfully influential Parsi community, and the vigorous hordes of Muhammadan invaders that came in their wake, and lastly the European nations that have come into India, have all tended to become more or less exclusive sections of the community, practising effective, social non-cooperation towards each other in their several measure and to varying extents. The just nemesis of the grave injustice of Hindu caste has come in the fullness of time in the shape of the new White Brahmin from the West who despises the Brahmin himself and denies him a common human status and social equality. Considerable numbers of Europeans who have come out to this country have lived almost as a new caste apart, entering into scarcely any but official and business relations with the people of this country, and cultivating no human relationships such as might have enriched both and strengthened the common bonds of our imperial citizenship. Here is the real sore-spot in Indian life and Mr. Gandhi is but taking full advantage of it. Such people by their criminal folly and unneighbourly exclusive attitude, have not only lived impoverished selfsufficient lives themselves, but by their careless

words and thoughtless actions, have helped to sow the wind, and now we are reaping the whirlwind. The supreme need of the hour is for all communities in this great land to realise the urgent and absolute necessity for effective responsive cooperation, as co-partners in the great and wonderful God-given task of constructing a sublime common destiny, more richly varied in content and quality, than is possible for each in their artificial poverty-stricken isolation. God give us faith and hope and charity in this sore hour of our trial.

Right in the bosom of the fertile Indo-Gangetic plain and not far from the ancient and historic cities of Agra and Delhi, stands in its deathless beauty, as the supreme symbol of perfect cooperation, the noblest monument of love ever built by the hand of man, that miracle in marble, the Taj Mahal on the banks of the Jumna; which alike in its rise and perfection is the visible type and pattern of the Eternal India of our dreams and hopes. Just as in its rise it involved the coordination of the rich material of many lands by the concerted action of the people of many races, each bringing their best unto it in the India of that day, and just as it stands in the perfect symmetry and coordinated harmony of its parts in the India of to-day, even so the Eternal India of our age-long aspiration will be realised only through the willing sacrifices and rich mutual give and take in the

common life of the effectual conscious responsive cooperation of the great family of many nations that constitute the people of India. If Mr. Gandhi by his movement of political Non-cooperation, has but opened the eyes and quickened the thoughts and hearts of the many sections of the peoples of India, to the grave dangers and sore evils of the subtler and more insidious contagion of social Non-cooperation, to which we have so long been blind and insensible, he would indeed have done a great and lasting service to India and the world alike. (If perchance the vision is dim and the goal seems far off and hopeless to any of our fellow pilgrims in the long and weary march through the wilderness to the Promised Land of the City of God in our midst, if any amongst us are despirited and down-hearted) to such we say in the immortal words of the poet :—

“ Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor falleth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars :
It may be in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright."

(Arthur Hugh Clough)





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